Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
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FBIS-NES-95-243 *19 December 1995*

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Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Eritrean Foreign Ministry Statement on Conflict

EA1812194095 Asmara Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea in Tigrinya 0400 GMT 18 Dec 95

["Statement Issued by the Foreign Affairs Ministry on the conflict between Eritrean and Yemeni Forces over the Hanish Islands"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is no doubt in history as to Eritrea's ownership of the Hanish Islands, which are found in the Bab al-Mandab [strait] and which experienced the colonial rule of the Turks, the Italians, the British, and the Ethiopians.

Within its two years of power, the Eritrean Government never had the ability and time to think of any viable plans for these islands, although it knew very well the above-stated facts. The Yemeni Government started to deploy its forces around March [1995] on these islands, though it has never had any claims to these islands throughout the centuries.

This act of occupation was an abrupt development for the Eritrean Government and hence the government sent a high-level government delegation to Sanaa on 22 November 1995 with a view to calmly sorting out and rectifying the mistake. Hence, the delegation presented three points as follows:

1. To start a dialogue between the two sides as soon as possible.
2. To have both sides agree on the basis and objectives of the issue with a view to solving the problem.
3. To have both sides accept international arbitration and abide by its decisions.

The Yemeni authorities said the islands were theirs but that they were ready to talk. A date was fixed for the two sides to meet in Asmara and the first round of talks was held as agreed on 7 December 1995. The proposals from the Asmara talks for both sides were as follows:

For the Eritrean Government side, the issue revolves around the cluster of Hanish islands. Solving the problem should be based on Sanaa's proposal for direct talks with the arbitration of the International Court of Justice.

Though the Eritrean Government was ready and willing for the talks to start immediately and for a speedy agreement, the Yemeni Government delegation said we are here to talk about Greater Hanish Island and not the cluster of Hanish islands. Therefore, a date was fixed for February [1996].

While the Government of Eritrea was awaiting the date in a bid to obtain a lasting solution to this issue through dialogue and international law, a unit of Yemeni forces advanced to Lesser Hanish Island on the night of 15 December 1995, provoked units of the Eritrean forces there in a manner likely to incite war and then turned back. Worst of all, at 0530 on 16 December 1995, the Yemeni government forces carried out military attacks assisted by the Air Force on areas where our defense forces were deployed. This attack lasted the whole day of 17 December 1995.

In the conflict, which the Eritrean Government never expected nor wanted, about 180 Yemeni soldiers were captured, a helicopter gun-ship was burned down, while many were killed and wounded. On the side of our defense forces, six were martyred and three were wounded. Our territory, which was occupied by the Yemeni forces, is now under the control of our defense forces.

While the Eritrean Government admits that this situation is unacceptable and sad, it believes that the strategic relationship and brotherhood of the two countries and people is paramount. Hence, it reaffirms its readiness and belief that the issue will be resolved through dialogue and international arbitration. The Eritrean Government states that it will repatriate the soldiers captured in this unwanted and useless war, without any arbitration and at a convenient time.

[Signed] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 17 December 1995.

Yemeni Prime Minister Vows To Defend All Land

JN1812175695 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Our country today marked the Arab police day which falls on 18 December every year. The sixth traffic week for the period 18-25 December also opened today. A speech rally, an award ceremony, and a military parade were held at the central security square in Sanaa today. The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani. He gave a speech in which he congratulated those who were honored at the ceremony. [passage omitted]

The prime minister spoke about the current standoff between our country and Eritrea. He said that Eritrean forces carried out a treacherous offensive against Yemeni territories in the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island. He said these forces violated all international norms and charters and good-neighborliness. He said the offensive came after our country proposed a peaceful solution to the standoff.

He added: As we seek to settle this problem through peaceful means, we will not relinquish a single inch of

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the Yemeni lands. We will stand as one rank to defend the Yemeni soil and all territories. [passage omitted]

Official Holds Eritrea Responsible for 'Aggression'

JN1812190895 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Within the framework of the Foreign Ministry's current meetings with the diplomatic missions in Sanaa to explain the dimensions of the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir, brother Ghalib 'Ali Jamil, Foreign Ministry under secretary for political affairs, met with heads of the Asian, African, and European states' missions, and briefed them on the latest developments in relations between Yemen and Eritrea and the armed aggression against the Yemeni territory.

He held Eritrea fully responsible for the results and repercussions of the aggression, stressing Yemen's sovereignty over all the islands.

Salih, Afworki Reach Cease-Fire Agreement

JN1812173095 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source made the following statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA': Based on the telephone contact between Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Eritrean President Isaias Afworki, an agreement has been reached on a cease fire on the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island and on implementing it.

During the conversation with the Eritrean president, brother Lt. Gen. President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, stressed the need to remove all the traces of the Eritrean aggression against the island in order to pave the way for the resumption of the talks on the sea border between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea to promote relations of friendship and neighborliness between the two countries and to guarantee the legitimate rights of each side in accordance with the international charters and laws.

While expressing its readiness to open dialogue and to settle differences through peaceful means, the Republic of Yemen affirms that it will not relinquish any of its legitimate rights based on international charters and laws.

The source clarified that the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island, which began last Friday, has resulted in the martyrdom of three members of the military garrison on the island.

We extend heartfelt condolences to the martyrs' families, and beseech Almighty God to have mercy on their souls and to make Paradise their final abide.

Yemeni Envoy Confirms Cease-Fire

NC1812185695 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemen and Eritrea this evening agreed on a cease-fire and on Eritrean forces' withdrawal from the Hanish Archipelago, as was announced by the Yemeni side.

The Yemeni ambassador in London Hasan al-'Amri confirmed this agreement in an exclusive interview with MBC this evening. He clarified that a telephone call was placed between the two countries' presidents during which agreement was reached on a cease-fire and the Eritrean forces' withdrawal from the positions they occupied.

Reports from the Hanish Archipelago had indicated that military aircraft and vessels took part in the fighting that broke out between the Eritrean and Yemeni forces. The reports added that many people were killed or wounded and many were taken prisoner in the fighting, but the two sides were concerned with containing the crisis before it develops further.

The Eritrean Foreign Ministry had proposed three points as a basis for a solution. The proposal called for initiating negotiations, agreeing on principles to solve the dispute, and resorting to international arbitration.

Meanwhile, the Yemeni ambassador to Britain [not further identified] confirmed that a telephone call was made between the Eritrean and Yemeni presidents in an attempt to solve the dispute.

[Begin Yemeni ambassador recording, in London] We wanted to discuss the issue amicably in a brotherly way as two neighbors. We had no real forces in the islands, just a symbolic presence.

Since the massive invasion on Friday, which we did not expect, losses and casualties occurred. But fortunately the president, Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, sought to contain the situation. In a communication between the two presidents today, agreement was reached on a cease-fire, withdrawal, and exchange of prisoners, because prisoners have been taken.

A few minutes ago I was speaking with Sanaa and this is the situation. [end recording]

A Yemeni military source confirmed that the cease-fire is still holding despite recent violations.

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Reportage on Military Activities in Conflict

Yemen Loses Island, Counterattacks

NC1812131095 Paris AFP in English 1224 GMT 18 Dec 95

[Report by Hammoud Mounassar]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Sanaa, Dec 18 (AFP) — Eritrean forces on Monday [18 December] captured a disputed Red Sea island from Yemeni troops despite the announcement of a ceasefire aimed at ending a three-day battle in which at least nine soldiers have died.

Yemen said it had launched a counter air attack involving Soviet-made MiG 29s to take back the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, which it said was invaded last Friday by Eritrean forces landing by boat.

The island was captured after Eritrea launched a "violent attack at 1230 p.m." (0930 GMT) Monday in violation of a ceasefire, a military official here said.

"The Eritrean forces launched a treacherous attack with the support of reinforcements, which allowed them to extend control over the island," he said. [passage omitted]

Further on Loss of Island

JN1812173695 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In a sudden development in the Yemeni-Eritrean crisis regrading the three islands, al-Hanish al-Kabir, al-Hanish al-Saghir, and Zuqar in the Red Sea, the Eritrean forces today attacked and captured the island of Hanish al-Kabir. This was reported by the Yemeni News Agency, SABA', which added that the attack came following Eritrea's agreement on the cease fire.

The Eritrean ambassador in Sanaa confirmed this morning that the Yemeni and Eritrean presidents yesterday agreed on forming a committee which comprises ranking representatives of both countries and two U.S. diplomats to supervise the cease fire.

The Eritrean forces' control of al-Hanish al-Kabir came in the wake of battles in which many from both sides were killed. The Eritrean forces also captured more than 180 Yemeni soldiers. Yemeni sources said that Israeli officers, stationed in bases in the Eritrean islands of (Haws al-Kubra), (Haws al-Sughra), and Dahlac, are helping the Eritrean forces in their aggression against Yemen. The Yemeni sources added that the Eritrean forces received recently Israeli weapons, communication equipment, and ammunition. The Eritrean forces denied this and reiterated their sovereignty on the disputed islands.

Yemen today reaffirmed its determination to restore the island before embarking on any talks. A Yemeni official said that Yemeni MiG 29 planes strafed Eritrean positions on the island this afternoon. The Yemeni official said that the Eritrean forces violated the cease fire which was announced this morning and launched a fierce attack in the morning.

Our radio correspondent Ahmad Birru asked 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Ansi, the Yemeni president's political adviser, about this sudden development. He said:

[Begin al-'Ansi recording] We in Yemen were surprised at this sudden development and at its timing in particular. As you know, contacts were held between the Yemeni and Eritrean sides at the highest levels. In the last meeting held in Asmara, it was agreed to postpone the discussion of the issue until after Ramadan and to calm things on various levels until we reach an agreement or seek arbitration. We were surprised by the criminal attack Friday evening. This has escalated the problem and ignited the war.

We can say that what happened confirms that the neighbors were planning this, and we do not know whom they are serving by this. President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Eritrean President Isaias Afworki agreed on a cease fire to return things to normal and to remove the traces of aggression, and then to begin dialogue. If this were implemented this would be fine, otherwise Yemen will retain its right to defend its territory. [end recording]

Israeli Accused of Leading Eritreans

JN1812181295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Dec 95

[Report by Faysal Mukarram in Sanaa]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Yemeni Government announced that the Eritrean forces, which carried out a sudden attack on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir in the Red Sea on Friday, have captured the island. The Yemeni News Agency, SABA', said that the Eritrean forces captured the island despite the cease-fire reached between the two sides in light of the telephone call conducted between Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Eritrean President Isaias Afworki. Meanwhile, the Yemeni forces are abiding by the cease-fire.

A responsible Yemeni source said that President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih asked the Eritrean president to remove all traces of aggression against the island in preparation for resuming the talks on the sea border between

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the two countries in accordance with the international charters and both sides' rights. The Yemeni source added that a Russian cargo ship was hit by the fire of the Eritrean forces on Monday when it was trying to cross the international navigation crossing near the area of fighting in the Red Sea. The source gave no details about the extent of the damage inflicted on the ship.

The Yemeni source noted that the Yemeni Government received information affirming that an Israeli pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Duma, led the Eritrean attack on the Yemeni island from the Eritrean island of Dahlac last Friday. The attack was supported by military units from the Eritrean-controlled (Haws al-Kubra) and (Haws al-Sughra).

In another development, a responsible Yemeni source said that the Yemeni Government is determined to restore the al-Hanish al-Kabir by all means and as soon as possible. The source added that the Yemeni Government prefers a peaceful solution and seeks to avoid kindling the conflict in the interest of Red Sea security and stability so as to maintain normal international navigation in it.

Israel Denies Knowledge of Role

TA1912105695 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 19 Dec 95 pp 1, 6

[Report by Arye Dayan and Dan Avidan]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yemeni sources maintained yesterday that Israel had helped the Eritrean Army seize a Red Sea island from the Yemeni Army. According to them, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers supervised the invasion into al-Hanish al-Kabir island, while the invading Eritrean commando troops used combat equipment supplied by Israel. The Foreign Ministry said in reaction: "We know nothing about it." Eritrean sources also denied the report.

The Yemeni sources said the operation was overseen by IDF officers deployed in three Eritrean islands in the Red Sea: Greater Haws, Lesser Haws, and Dahlac. They added that the Eritrean invasion troops used fast boats, weapons, ammunition, and communication equipment received from Israel. [passage omitted]

Although the Foreign Ministry reacted by saying "we know nothing about it," a ministry source defined Israel-Eritrea relations as "good relations developing in the right direction." [passage omitted]

Yemeni Planes Attack Island

NC1912083195 Paris AFP in English 0753 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 19 (AFP) — Yemeni warplanes on Tuesday [19 December] launched a new wave of attacks to dislodge Eritrean forces from a disputed Red Sea island they captured on Monday, diplomats said.

Russian-made MiG 29s flew over Sanaa headed for the island of Hanish al-Kabir (Greater Hanish) after taking off from a base close to the capital, the diplomats said.

A Yemeni official said Monday after the island's fall that Sanaa was determined to take back the island before holding any negotiations. Eritrean forces seized the island, north of the Bab el Mandeb straits, after three-days of fighting.

Yemen has nine MiG-29s, with six operational, according to diplomats here.

Yemen's official AL-THAWRAH newspaper said Tuesday it favors resorting to negotiations rather than military force to win the withdrawal of Eritrean forces. "Yemen is in a position to regain its rights, but hopes immediately that Eritrea will revise its position and withdraw its forces as soon as possible," it said.

"The patience and wisdom of the Yemenis must in no case be interpreted as a sign of weakness or inability to repel the aggressors," the newspaper said.

Arab League Issues Statement Supporting Yemen

NC1812153595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1400 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)— The Arab League has confirmed Yemen's right to and sovereignty over its three Red Sea islands and its right to defend its territory, insist on its national borders and regional waters, and protect them against any encroachment.

The Arab League general secretariat issued a statement today on the Yemeni-Eritrean clashes. It voiced support for the Republic of Yemen against the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni islands of Hanish al-Kabir, which claimed a number of innocent Yemeni victims.

The statement regretted the serious developments that conflict with the ethics of good neighborliness as well as with the document of understanding in which Yemen reiterated its keenness to uphold the principle of dialogue and negotiations on the naval borders between the two countries.

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The general secretariat statement called for restoring the situation to what it was before the aggression and refraining from subjecting the Red Sea region to unwarranted tension.

The statement pointed out that providing a favorable climate for dialogue between the two countries in accordance with international laws and charters and in the framework of the good neighborliness policy is bound to enhance mutual respect that draws on the historic relations linking the two neighbors.

Eritrea: Arab League 'Meddling'

NC1812125595 Paris AFP in English 1221 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 18 (AFP)—Eritrea accused the Arab League on Monday [18 December] of meddling in the country's dispute with Yemen over a strategic Red Sea island that has flared into armed clashes.

"That this affair concerns primarily and solely the two parties to the dispute, Eritrea and Yemen, is only too apparent," the Eritrean foreign ministry said in a statement received in Cairo.

"The Arab League has gone out of its way to issue an inflammatory statement thereby meddling in matters that are beyond its writ," it said.

The League has "no legal or moral authority to adjudicate in matters that concern Eritrea and Yemen alone and (Asmara) urges it to refrain from unwarranted acts of interference," it said.

On Sunday, the League said it "condemns Eritrea's aggressive act on the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir" and called on Eritrean forces to withdraw from the island to "reestablish the status quo."

Yemen's official news agency SABA announced Monday that the entire island had "fallen completely into the hands of the Eritrean forces of aggression, even though Asmara had announced a ceasefire."

But Eritrea's deputy ambassador to Cairo, Ghebrehiwet Fesseha [name as received], told AFP he had "no reports" of resumed fighting on the island after a ceasefire took hold at midnight on Sunday.

"This fighting was not initiated by Eritrea," he added.

Yemen Informs League of 'Aggression'

JN1912070295 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Muhammad Luqman, our country's ambassador to Egypt and our permanent representative to the Arab League, presented a memorandum to Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Arab League secretary general, yesterday concerning the Eritrean forces' military aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island.

This took place at a meeting yesterday between Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid and the permanent representative.

Eritrea Called 'Threat to Peace, Stability'

NC1812141095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1310 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 18 Dec (MENA) — In commentaries today, the Yemeni mass media denounced the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of Hanish, describing it as a treacherous attack that undermines peace and stability in the region.

Sanaa radio said the Eritrean president, who is coming under strong pressure at home, embarked on his recent adventure against Yemen to distract his people from internal problems. It added that he organized demonstrations in Asmarah to blackmail his people through repeating empty slogans against Yemen.

The radio pointed out that the Eritrean president's greed increased when he learned of tourist projects Sanaa is planning to push development in Yemen ahead.

Yemeni television accused the Eritrean president of pursuing a hostile line against Arab states in complete disregard for the support Arab states gave his movement in the seventies before Eritrea's independence and before he came to power.

The television commentary was surprised that Afwerke should claim these islands in such a rough manner at the precise moment the free-zone project was being launched in Aden, and just as tourist development plans were taking their first steps in Hanish.

Yemen's official newspaper AL-THAWRAH described the Eritrean conduct as treacherous aggression, an irrational venture, and an act of ingratitude against a country that gave resolute support to the Eritrean revolution before independence. The paper said that instead of representing a new Arab position in the Red Sea, independent Eritrea has turned into a threat to peace and stability in the region.

Radio Commentary Explains Yemen's Stand

JN1812214195 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1745 GMT 18 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary; from the "Issues and Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Welcome brothers and sisters: Yemen has always been keen to maintain stability and

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peace in the Red Sea area and to ward off conflicts and strife. The Yemeni Republic is known for its deep respect for the historic ties linking the Yemeni people with the peoples of East Africa, including the Eritrean people. Without doubt, the Eritrean people, like our people, have been taken aback by the Eritrean Government's blatant aggression against al-Hanish al-Kabir island, which has always been considered to be Yemeni territory, and which has never been disputed by any country or power for centuries.

But as much as it is obvious that Yemen has historic rights over the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir to the extent allowed by the international maritime law [words indistinct] sovereignty over it. In spite of all these considerations, the Yemeni Republic was taken by surprise when Eritrea on 11 February issued a warning to Yemeni citizens and the military unit stationed on al-Hanish al-Kabir island to leave and stop work on an investment project which one of the companies was engaged in on the island. The Yemeni Republic was then keen to contain the situation and entered into contacts with Eritrea out of its sincere wish to resolve with Eritrea any disputes over the maritime borders through dialogue and peaceful negotiation in conformity with international laws and conventions. In the wake of this, several meetings were held in Sanaa and Asmara, and the last meeting was held in Asmara.

At all those meetings Yemen stressed its readiness to engage in dialogue and to sign a memorandum of understanding on the maritime borders on the basis of bilateral negotiations. In the event of agreement not being reached, the matter should be put to arbitration or placed before the International Court of Justice. This stance embodied our country's good intentions and adherence to the distinguished historic relations between the two countries and whatever will serve stability and peace in the Red Sea region. We should note here that the meetings held in Sanaa and Asmara resulted in an agreement to contain any dispute and to resume dialogue after the blessed month of Ramadan.

However, the Eritrean Government failed to respect its commitment to this. On Friday, 15 December, it carried out a flagrant aggression against Yemen, violating territorial waters and threatening peace and security and international shipping in the Red Sea region. It is natural to say that Yemen is devoting its utmost attention to resolving its differences with Eritrea by way of dialogue. This is out of a conviction that this is the best means. However, if this produces no results we will resort to the International Court of Justice.

In calling for dialogue, Yemen is demonstrating its keenness to preserve the security and stability of the Red Sea region and of international shipping there. It is keen to preserve its links and relations with Eritrea. As much as Yemen is keen to engage in dialogue over the maritime borders with Eritrea, Yemen is also keen on adhering to its historic rights of sovereignty over the al-Hanish al-Kabir island as defined by International Maritime Law. In short, it is in Eritrea's interests to respond to Yemen's wish to resolve differences by way of dialogue and peaceful negotiations, which is the best means, or by resorting to arbitration or to the International Court of Justice.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Syrian Envoy Meets 'Abd-al-Majid, Comments

NC1812150295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1250 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)— Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid today received Syrian Ambassador 'Isa Darwish, who is also the permanent Syrian delegate to the Arab League.

Following the meeting, Darwish stated that he briefed the secretary general on the latest developments in the Middle East peace process in light of the regional tour U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher made recently.

Touching on the Syrian-Israeli negotiations slated for 27 December, Ambassador Darwish said that there is positive progress in the peace process, expressing the hope that the Syrian-Israeli negotiations will lead to a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines so that a just, all-embracing, and lasting peace can be achieved in the Middle East.

The Syrian ambassador reiterated that his country's position is very clear and that it is based on UN Security Council resolution 242, which provides for Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, as well as the Madrid conference and the implementation of all the resolutions of international legitimacy, including withdrawal from south Lebanon and Western al-Biqa'.

The Syrian ambassador pointed out that Israel created obstacles when it suggested the establishment of early warning stations on the Golan Heights and security zones that do not provide equality between the two sides. He affirmed that his country categorically rejects these Israeli measures, which conflict with Syrian sovereignty.

The Syrian ambassador pointed out that there is a new Israeli language that became clear after Warren Christopher's visit to Israel and Damascus. He expressed the hope that this new language will be accompanied by actual deeds.

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Islamic Affairs

League Condemns Israeli 'Measures' in Jerusalem

LD1812203395 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1940 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mecca, 18 Dec — The Islamic World League's general secretariat expressed its denunciation for all the Israeli measures in the city of Jerusalem, and condemned the Israeli attempts to transfer the foreign embassies to it.

The general secretariat said in a statement today that Jerusalem had a special position in Muslims' hearts because it is the home of al-Aqsa mosque and the point from which Prophet Muhammad, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, ascended to heaven. The Muslims cannot abandon it, no matter how much Israel tries.

The official spokesman of the league said that the Muslim nation should confront the attempts to usurp Jerusalem through what Israel called Jerusalem 2,000. [passage omitted]

The spokesman appealed to the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Arab League to exert all the efforts to convince the countries of the world not to respond to the Israeli pressures that aim at making Jerusalem the capital of Israel and the location for the international diplomatic missions.

He said that preserving the Islamic city of Jerusalem was an Islamic duty, referring to the sanctity of the al-Aqsa mosque in it. [passage omitted: verse from the Koran on the prophet's night trip from Mecca to Jerusalem]

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 10 Dec

NC1612185095

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 10 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Reports View Rigging of Runoff Elections
2. U.S., Western Reaction to Vote Rigging Noted
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REPORTS VIEW RIGGING OF RUNOFF ELECTIONS

Though the parliamentary elections and their runoff are over, this edition continues to be almost totally devoted to attacking the government and the ruling party for what it claims to be widespread rigging of the elections. Stories published throughout the paper detail incidents and attacks on the Labor Party and Islamic Alliance candidates in a number of governorates. Thus the main 800-word story on page 1 written by Mu'tazz al-Hadidi and Dawud Hasan which is carried under the banner headline "Demonstrations To Protest the 19 November Coup Continue" starts by claiming that "The angry reaction to the rigging of the elections has continued. The masses came out into the streets, closed roads, and destroyed everything in their way while shouting for the downfall of the National Democratic Party [NDP] and its thugs. They were confronted by the security forces which opened fire and tear gas." The report then describes these so-called protest demonstrations in various localities and the arrests made by the security forces. At the center of the report is a cartoon showing a man carrying a candle labelled rigging and a bomb bearing the words "the people's anger" with prime minister 'Atif Sidqi sitting on it. The prime minister is shown extending his hand to take the candle and saying: "Please give me a light."

Dozens of stories about the government and NDP's rigging of elections and the violent reactions are detailed on page 1 and the inside pages. The following lists the articles' headlines and brief summaries of some of them:

On page 1 are found the following headlines: "Al-Shaykh Stays True to the Party's Course and Rejects an Offer from the Security Services and NDP." The 220-word report by 'Amir 'Id cites Labor Party candidate 'Abd-al-Rahim al-Shaykh who ran in the elections in Alexandria as saying that he rejected an offer made to him by the security services and the NDP agents not to represent the Labor Party but to fight as an NDP candidate against a dissident NDP candidate who fought the elections as an independent.

"Kamal Ahmad Asks for Political Asylum in the United States." The 200-word unattributed report claims that leading Nasirite Party member Kamal Ahmad has asked the U.S. Embassy in Cairo to grant him political asylum in the United States following the security services persecution, the inhuman practices that violate human rights, and the blatant rigging in his electoral district.

Other headlines on page 1 read: "Eight Dead and 11 Injured. The Abu Hammad Inhabitants Burn the House of the NDP Candidate." "Fayiz Zayid Appeals Against the Results of Voting in Tanta District." "Opposition

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Parties To Hold a News Conference To Expose Election Rigging." "In Suhaj: The NDP Was Declared the Winner Before the Counting Ended."

The headlines of reports on the elections outcome and the accusations of government rigging on page 2 read: "In al- Rahmaniyah: Police Uses Tear Gas To Disperse Citizens." "Eight Killed and 600 Injured in Disuq." "In Dikirnis: Low Turnout and Voters Did Not Exceed 1 Percent of Eligible Voters." This 500—word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad says that the Islamic Alliance candidate Shukri Shaltut withdrew from the runoff elections 24 hours earlier because of heavy pressures exerted on him and his supporters to ensure his failure. The security forces raided dozens of houses of his supporters in the district and arrested them in a barbaric manner." "The Farce in Nahtay, al-Gharbiyah: The Intervention of the Police and State Security Intelligence Operatives Condemns the Government of Terrorism and Violence."

A 900-word report by 'Ali al-Qammash on page 3 under the headline "Curfew Imposed on Atfih and al-Saff. Hundreds Arrested in Manshiyat al-Qanatir, Kirdasah, and Awsim" details various incidents of rigging and attacks on opposition supporters in various electoral districts of al-Jizah to ensure victory for the NDP candidates. Another headline reads: "The Wednesday Runoff Exploded the Abu Kabir Masses' Silence."

Other headlines on other pages read:

On page 4: "In al-Matariyah and 'Ayn Shams: Security Officials Drew Up Plan To Make Mukhtar Nuh Lose Before the Runoff;" "In Port Said: The Elections Committee Secretary Refused To Rig. He Was Beaten;" "In Suez: Following the 1 Million Pound Bribe To Rig the First District, 50,000 Pounds Only Changed the Result of the Second District."

On page 6: "In al-Daqahliyah, Evidence Besets the Government. The Police Arrested 124. The Thugs Forged 200,000 Votes;" "In Armant: "The NDP Reels;" "In al-Nuhayrah and Alexandria: The Runoff Farce a True Copy of the Black Wednesday One."

On page 7: "In al-Manyal District: Islamic Alliance Candidate Dr. al-Ghazali and the Independent Candidate Withdrew in Protest of Rigging;" "In the Al-Fayym Runoff: Terrorism and Rigging in Favor of the NDP;" "In Kirdasah: Orders From Above To Rig Against the Alliance Candidates;" "Administrative Court Orders Repeal of the al-Mahallah District Election;" "In al-Sharqiyah: The Alliance's Two Candidates Withdrew From the Elections and Counting Committees To Protest Rigging."

A 1,200-word report on page 9 by Subhi Buhayri gives an overall review of the rigging the government and the NDP resorted to ensure victory for their candidates in the elections runoff. It details rigging in several electoral districts, including the intervention of the police in some instances to terrorize the citizens to vote for the NDP candidates. The report notes that the Islamic Alliance candidates in several districts withdrew "in a last attempt to stop the bloodshed that began at dawn on elections day."

An unattributed 400-word report under the headline "The Runoff Massacre: The Interior Ministry: 11 Killed, 12 Injured, and 162 Detained. The Facts of the Incidents: More Than 20 Killed, 200 Injured, and 700 Detained" takes a look at the statements issued by the Interior Ministry on casualties during the runoff elections. It says that the statements show that "the thugs were the stars of the 1995 elections. This led many independent candidates to withdraw because of the rigging and the police forces' heavy hand that protected the NDP thugs." The report notes that the Interior Ministry's statements blamed the incidents on the "extremists operating from the sugar cane fields. But this was a big lie since incidents were limited to Naj' Hammadi." It adds that no similar incidents took place in Upper Egypt. The report then says that the casualty figures in the ministry's statements referred to those that occurred in some selected governorates but ignored the bloody incidents in other governorates.

Another unattributed 1,200 report on page 9 reviews the government ploys to prevent prominent opposition figures from winning the elections. It cites in this case the candidacies of Labor Party Chairman Ibrahim Shukri, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn, and others. Touching on the main Muslim Brotherhood [MB] candidates, the report says: "The government's insolence last Wednesday reached the level where security men attacked Counselor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, the Muslim Brotherhood spokesman and candidate in his electoral district of al-Duqqi. Any comment on al-Hudyabi losing in al-Duqqi is useless. All that can be said is that this symbol won through the masses' will but the government replaced him by the veteran minister Amal 'Uthman when the election outcome and even the whole election process were repealed early in the morning. The outcome was replaced by an already prepared government result." It adds that Ahmad Sayf-al-Islam al-Banna had the same fate in his candidacy for the al-Darb al-Ahmar district, his birthplace.

A third unattributed 1,200-word report on the same page also dwells on the issue of rigging, the so-called NDP thugs, and the need to have money to bribe the voters.

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U.S., WESTERN REACTION TO VOTE RIGGING NOTED

An unattributed 500-page report on pages 1 and 2 deals with U.S. and western reaction to the Egyptian elections. The report begins by saying that "the U.S. State Department has hardened its stand on the rigging of the Egyptian elections which it considered a scandal that embodied all forms of human rights violations" and adds that U.S. officials and human rights circles were dismayed by statements made by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif and President Mubarak to the effect that "the U.S. Administration does not interfere in Egypt's internal affairs and has not asked it to start any investigation into the accusations leveled against the government of rigging the elections." It notes that U.S. officials and the U.S. Embassy are preparing a complete file on the rigging and that they have held for that purpose meetings with candidates from all parties and obtained official documents confirming the "crime perpetrated during the past two weeks." It says that despite Mubarak's denial, the State Department spokesman said that Washington is waiting for the result of the official government's investigation which Egypt was asked to carry out. The report adds that international press agencies cited western diplomatic sources in Cairo as saying that their governments will limit their aid and loans to countries that follow the democratic course and respect human rights and therefore do not rule out the possibility "that economic aid to Egypt could be affected by the election outcome." The report says that the Americans were keen on underlining their slogans on democracy "so as not to be accused of double standards and of giving free reign to dictatorial governments that violate human rights." It also notes the renewed calls within the Congress to reduce or stop aid to Egypt.

JORDAN'S MB CONDEMNS PLOT AGAINST SUDAN

An unattributed 100-word report on page 1 says that the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan has issued a statement condemning "the international plotting against Sudan that targets its unity and independence." The statement also regretted the involvement of some Arab countries in the plot.

TUNISIA'S ISLAMIC MOVEMENT PRAISES RELEASE OF SYRIAN MB MEMBERS

The paper carries the 200-word text of a statement issued by the Tunisian Ennahda Movement praising Syria for refusing to submit to the "conditions for capitulation offered to the Arabs" and for continuing its support for the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. It then hails the release of more than 1,000 detained Muslim Brotherhood members saying that this "will strengthen the domestic front" against foreign challenges.

ARREST OF JORDANIAN ISLAMIST NOTED

A 50-word item on page 1 reports the arrest of the known Jordanian Islamist Layth Shubaylat.

LABOR PARTY LEADER COMMENTS ON ELECTIONS, VIOLENCE

In his weekly 1,200-word article on pages 1 and 2, Labor Party Chairman Ibrahim Shukri deals with the outcome of the parliamentary elections and accusations of rigging. Starting by dealing with the phenomenon of violence during the campaign, he says that this is an alien phenomenon and significant in that it showed that violence is spreading within Egyptian society and to areas not affected so far. He then adds another observation, namely that "the incidents came as the phenomenon of terrorism was abating. Not a single terrorist incident happened during the elections which is an indication that the phenomenon of terrorism is not isolated from what is taking place in Egyptian society. He notes that incidents of violence in areas other than Upper Egypt indicate that rigging was the main cause. He then adds: "The important thing is that the electoral districts where the Labor Party and the Muslim Brotherhood had candidates did not witness violent acts, thuggery, crime, etc." He goes on to say: "I thank God that despite all the false claims made by officials against us and despite all the rumors and slogans, none of our candidates, our supporters, or representatives had been accused, I repeat accused, of committing a single violent incident. Had violence been at the core of our ideas and had we been advocates of violence and any such impudent talk, then our supporters would have carried out these acts." He then gives several examples and compare this year's violence with that of 1977. Concluding his article, he thanks all those who voted for him and vows to continue to work for the people. He then thanks the Labor Party candidates, adding that "we will work to achieve consultation and democracy" despite the long and arduous road.

WRITER CRITICIZES FREEDOM TO SELL SEX PUBLICATIONS

A 500-word article by Dr. Muhammad Jamal Hishmat laments the abundance of sex books and magazines in book shops and newspaper kiosks and their detrimental effects on society and young generations while the Muslim Brotherhood is being persecuted and accusations leveled against it. Saying that while virtue and morals are being chased, "we are beset by decadence and vice inside our houses through television" thus mak-

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ing it impossible for a Muslim to rear his children according to Islam's tenets and morals. He criticizes the freedom to lie, referring in this case to what is being written about the Muslim Brotherhood, and the freedom to attack the opposition and violate their honor and possessions. Summing up, he concludes by saying that the freedom allowed is only that for the regime's officials and their supporters while others are investigated as plotters who want to change the regime. But, he warns, God will punish them for their sins.

GOVERNMENT ASKED TO TRY KILLERS OF EGYPTIAN DETAINEES

A 400-word article by Dr. Sa'id Salamah Ibrahim on page 8 ridicules the statements about the NDP achievements and asks why the building of more detentions centers and the number of detainees who died in these centers were not included in the lists of these achievements. He says that "our government today is calling on the Israeli authorities to investigate and try the killers of Egyptian prisoners. Would it not be appropriate if it views the case of Egyptian prisoners it is holding before the rest of them die from physical and mental torture in the detention centers?" He also calls on the government to pay compensation to the families of those who died under torture.

COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS ISSUES STATEMENT ON RUNOFF CAMPAIGN

On pages 12 and 3, the paper publishes the 10,000-word text of the statement issued by the Egyptian Committee For Following Up the Parliamentary Elections. This is the committee's second statement and was issued in the wake of the runoff elections on 6 December. It was prepared by the committee on the basis of reports from its observers who covered more than 50 percent of the electoral districts on election day. The statement starts with a preamble citing the laws on elections and then reviews the outcome of the first round which was held on 29 November. The first part of the statement that follows the preamble then deals with the election campaigns as waged by the ruling and opposition parties. It reviews the government's performance, accusations that the security organs harassed and arrested the opposition candidates' representatives in the electoral committees, the official media's bias on the side of the NDP, the rulings by several courts annulling the outcome of the first results, and the government's disregard for these ruling. The statement then views the parties' and candidates' campaigns and the protests made by opposition candidates, notably the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic trend ones, and the rumors that preceded the second round about deals between various political forces which the committee says it could not prove or document. The statement follows this by viewing the public's stands, noting the confusion among the citizens and the belief that there could be no free and honest elections. It goes on to say that the violence witnessed by the people during the first round made them apprehensive about what could happen on the day of elections itself. The statement then gives the number of complaints received on election day. It views the government performance on that day and the dispatch of security patrols to maintain law and order. But it says that this was coupled by reports of blatant intervention in a number of cases which included the expulsion of opposition candidates from voting halls and the marking of voting cards in favor of NDP candidates. It then looks at the parties' campaigns and actions and the complaints received from them. On voting patterns, the statement comments on disparities between various areas and on the hundreds of complaints received. It particularly notes that, according to the observers' reports, "the so-called Islamists were subjected to most harassment and expulsion from the committees." It also noted the revival of tribal and feudal emotions during the campaign in Upper Egypt. After all this detailed review of the first and second rounds, the committee comes up with several recommendations. It first "appeals to the government to reread what happened during the 1995 elections and interpret what occurred without prejudice or self-delusion." Noting the unprecedented number of deaths during the campaign, it says that there is a fundamental error in the structure of state and society and the government has to face this courageously and unambiguously.

Its second recommendation is that members of the judiciary should have full control of future elections, starting with preparation of lists of eligible voters and ending with the counting of votes. The third recommendation urges a swift completion of a national identity number for every citizen so as to enable him to exercise his rights and notes that applying this recommendation will put an end to corruption during elections. The fourth recommendation calls for drawing up legal and moral rules for slogans and statements used in electioneering and even in public life in general so as to nip in the bud any deliberate or non deliberate attempt to revive religious, sectarian, or tribal conflicts.

The committee's fifth recommendation advises the setting up of a more reasonable ceiling for the candidates' expenses, adding that this could be changed every five years. It advocates that the parties should take the initiative on this to be followed by the appropriate government legislation. The sixth recommendation urges freedom to establish political parties. It notes that the "consequences of the disregard for this appeal in the past became evident during the 1995 parliamentary elections."

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It adds that most of the candidates were independent and most parties could not field candidates in all areas. "The remedy," it adds, "is to let parties be formed freely and unconditionally and without the government's hegemony or custodianship."

The seventh and final recommendation calls for freedom to publish newspapers, the establishment of radio and television companies, and licenses to establish nongovernmental television stations. It notes in this respect the little time given the opposition parties on radio and television while the government and its party continued to monopolize these organs of mass communications.

Prior to its recommendations, the committee goes to a great length to underline its neutrality. It says that its members remained patient despite the attacks on them by officials and pro- government papers. It also promises to issue a more detailed final report on the 1995 parliamentary elections which will be documented with statistics, pictures, and court ruling. The statement which was issued on 8 December was signed by Committee Chairman Dr. Sa'id al-Najjar, Vice Chairman Dr. Milad Hanna, and Secretary General Dr. Sa'd-al-Din Ibrahim.

Palestinian Affairs

PA, Hamas Teams Hold Talks in Cairo 18 Dec

Leaders Deliver Opening Speeches

JN1812150395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Dec 95

[Report by Hanadi al-Imam in Cairo]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first round of dialogue between the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] and Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement] began at 1200 today after the rest of the Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo from Khartoum.

Salim al-Za'nun, deputy speaker of the Palestine National Council, and Khalid Mish'al, head of the Hamas delegation and head of the Hamas Political Bureau, delivered the opening speeches.

Al-Za'nun said that we are Palestinian strugglers even though we have different views and that the Palestinian land is enough for all people to work out their strategy and serve the homeland in light of the difficult situation facing the Palestinian people. He then addressed the issues of Jerusalem, Israeli settlement, and refugee issues, as well as the suffering of the Palestinian people on bridges and crossings.

In his speech, al-Za'nun stressed the need for the two sides to reach common ground, referring to Israel's previous wagering that the internecine fighting would continue, that the Gaza-Jericho accord would be the first and last, and that Gaza would be a new Afghanistan.

Concluding, al-Za'nun said that we have to bury our previous differences for good and called for preventing any third party from interfering in the Palestinian people's affairs.

Khalid Mish'al, head of the Hamas delegation, who began his speech with verses from the holy Koran, said that Hamas believed in dialogue, that the rifle was used against the Israeli occupation only, and that the movement did not hold the Palestinian Authority [PA] responsible for any miscalculation. He added: We do not accuse others of treason or cast doubts on anybody, stressing the need to reach an understanding and stop the shedding of Palestinian blood. He then pointed out that Hamas has been cooperating with the PA since the latter's assumption of power despite the difference between the programs of the PA and Hamas.

Mish'al also said that Hamas would not concede its program to the National Authority and called for reaching common ground in the interest of the Palestine question at this critical stage for the Palestinian people. He also said that the PNA will need Hamas during the final status negotiations. The two delegations are expected to complete their meetings at 1800 today.

Hamas Spokesman Cited

JN1812154895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 18 Dec 95

[Report by Hanadi al-Imam in Cairo]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first session of dialogue between the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement will resume at 1800 this evening. The talks aim to work out an agenda for this dialogue and for the issues to be discussed by the two delegations in the forthcoming days. The two delegations held the opening session today. They asserted the need for dialogue and voiced their rejection of internal fighting among all segments of the Palestinian people.

Following the first session, Muhammad Nazzal, official spokesman for the Hamas delegation, said that Hamas will participate neither directly nor indirectly in the Palestinian legislative elections scheduled to be held on 20 January. He noted that this means that Hamas members will not run for elections either through the [Islamic National] Salvation Party, which was established recently, or as independents. He added: We will not take part in the elections under Israeli supervision.

Regarding the Hamas movement's armed struggle and the possibility of halting it, Nazzal said: Hamas will

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stop its operations only in the liberated areas, and not in the areas where the redeployment will take place. Following the elimination of occupation there will be no reason for armed resistance. This means stopping military operations in the Palestinian cities within area A and not in the villages and areas where there is an Israeli presence — namely, in areas B and C.

Nazzal noted that the target of the military operations is the Israeli occupation authorities and not the PNA. Nazzal stressed the need for safeguarding the freedom of opinion. He went on to say: It was the previous inter-Palestinian fighting that has prompted the two parties to hold dialogue in a bid to agree on certain formulas.

On the possibility of arriving at a final solution in this round, Nazzal said: This is not the final round. If no agreement was reached on the final formula further rounds will be held, for dialogue is open.

President Yasir 'Arafat is expected to arrive in Cairo on Wednesday after concluding his Gulf tour. He will take part in the closing sessions of the dialogue.

PA Officials Cited

NC1812175395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1615 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA) — Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, presidential secretary at the Palestinian National Authority and member of the Palestinian Authority's [PA] delegation to talks with the Hamas movement, has affirmed that the PA will request of the Hamas delegation that military operations launched from territories under the PA's jurisdiction be stopped.

He pointed out that the National Salvation Party, which Hamas set up, has agreed to that condition and so the movement has to commit itself to it.

'Abd-al-Rahim told reporters today that the PA is serious in seeking an agreement with Hamas through the current dialogue and that it hopes the movement will reach a common view on the matter among its leaders inside and abroad.

He noted that participation in the elections is open to all the Palestinian political powers to elect 82 members for the Palestinian Council. He pointed out that the elections will be held according to an individual ticket system. Any political power that fails to participate in the elections will isolate itself, particularly since we are on the verge of discussing the final status of the Palestinian issue in terms of borders, Jerusalem, and the refugees. He added: We want everybody to take part in discussing these essential matters.

He reaffirmed that there is an unwritten agreement between the PA and Jihad Organization not to conduct any acts that harm the Palestinian people or undermine their rights.

Meanwhile, Nabil 'Amr, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and member of the Palestinian delegation, said that the PA and Hamas will discuss a 16-article draft agreement to determine present and future relations between Hamas and the PA. Prominent among these are respect for the PA's commitment in the Oslo agreement and coordination between the two sides within the framework of legitimacy and democracy.

'Amr pointed out that the PA is eager to see Hamas take part in legislative elections, since this is the proper framework needed to establish a Palestinian political system. He added that 'Arafat will take part in later sessions of the current talks on returning from his Gulf tour.

Explaining that there is no deadline for these talks, he pointed out that they cannot be extended for long because of preparations for the elections.

Nabil 'Amr said that Cairo was selected as a venue for talks to give Hamas leading cadres abroad a chance to participate. Cairo is close to Hamas leaders both inside and abroad, he said.

He continued that Hamas response on participation in elections is still negative and that this participation will be discussed at the ongoing talks.

Talks Detailed Further

NC1812181095 Cairo MENA in English 1700 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 18 (MENA) — Talks between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and a delegation representing the Hamas movement started here today.

The PNA delegation is headed by deputy speaker of the Palestinian National Council Salim al-Za'nun.

The talks aimed at discussing links between the PNA and Hamas and the possibility of the participation by Hamas in the Palestinian elections.

The talks also aim at defining Hamas stance regarding military acts against the Israelis.

At the start of the session, head of the PNC Salim al-Za'nun hailed the awareness of the PNA and Hamas which opted for conducting a dialogue.

The two sides denied the chance to those who seek to flare up battles among the Palestinians, he said,

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asserting that there would be no bloodletting among the Palestinians.

On the other hand, the head of Hamas delegation thanked President Husni Mubarak and the Egyptian people and government for hosting this dialogue, expressing the hope that it would be crowned with success.

Egypt's Arab, Islamic and international weight would help to render these talks successful, he said.

Hamas believes in political pluralism, the head of Hamas delegation further said. This dialogue, however, does not mean that the movement will abandon its programme for the good of the authority, he added. We all want to reach a common ground in the coming phase which is crucial and serious as during which the issues of Jerusalem, settlements and refugees will be discussed, he said.

Hamas wants to see the Arab states strong even if the movement differs with the states politically, he added.

Meanwhile, the leader of Hamas delegation said before the talks that the dialogue with the Palestinian Authority could cover all controversial issues. There is, however, no timetable for completing the talks, he added.

The participation of Hamas in the coming legislative elections is a settled matter as the movement refuses to take part in them, member of Hamas delegation Muhammad Nazzal said.

Resisting Israeli occupation is a natural and strategic right to the movement, Nazzal added.

The participation of members of Hamas from within and without in the dialogue is an evidence of the unity of the movement's stance, he said.

Hamas Representative on Elections

NC1812193695 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1730 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA) — Usamah Hamdan, a member of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] delegation and its representative in Tehran, has stated that Hamas has decided not to take part in the Palestinian legislative elections. He maintained that this choice should not bother others.

Hamdan said that the Hamas delegation has come to Cairo to hold talks with the Palestinian Authority [PA] delegation. The talks will be under the caption "determining the domestic national unity and sparing the Palestinian people anything that would lead to internal confrontation," he added.

In an exclusive statement to MENA, the Hamas member said that the movement delegation has not presented any special demands prior to the talks. He said that the delegation prefers to discuss all topics at the negotiating table rather than through the media.

Usamah Hamdan noted that despite the presence of a dispute between the movement, which depends on the armed struggle for the sake of obtaining the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, and the PA, which believes in the principle of dialogue with the Israelis, there are still many points of agreement between the two sides. This is because we are one people and we work for one goal, namely the liberation of our land from occupation, he added.

The Hamas movement member stressed that the movement has so far not requested to establish a party of its own. We do not believe that the establishment of a Hamas party would represent a participation in the PA as there are opposition parties which do not participate in the PA or in the elections, Usamah Hamdan added.

Continuing, the Hamas member said: We cannot make any commitments that we will not stage attacks against Israel from the PA-controled land before we meet with the PA delegation.

Parties Agree on 7-Point Agenda

NC1912095595 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0915 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Dec (MENA) — MENA has learned that the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] agreed during their meetings which began yesterday on an agenda consisting of seven points that define the future relations between the two sides.

A member of the PNA delegation to the talks said that the seven points are:

-National unity;
-Political pluralism;
-Municipal or legislative elections;
-The PLO and PNA's international obligations;
-Relations between the PNA and Hamas and the latter's participation in the authority — this point includes several clauses concerning the media, the wanted Hamas members, weapons, and prisoners;
-The negotiations on the final stage between the PNA and Israel;
-And whatever issues that might arise.

On the other hand, Muhammad Subayh, Palestine National Council secretary general, Palestine's envoy to the Arab League, and member of the PNA delegation to the talks with Hamas, said the atmosphere which pre-

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vailed during the two sessions held yesterday was very positive and that issues were discussed very frankly.

In a statement to MENA, he added that the positive and negative aspects of the past stage were comprehensively reviewed during the two sessions and it became apparent that the two sides were eager to cooperate and to regard any inter-Palestinian fighting criminal. He stressed that there is full agreement on this and on resorting to democratic dialogue to resolve any issue in future.

The negotiations between the two sides are expected to continue until Thursday [21 December]. Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, who is due in Cairo tomorrow, will attend part of them.

Subayh said that future meetings are scheduled to be held periodically between the PNA and Hamas and that contacts between them are continuing.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Article on Israeli 'Genuine Desire' for 'Rapid Progress'

MM1812152795 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 Dec 95 p 17

[Article by Khayrallah Khayra'llah: "No One Wants To Inconvenience Syria"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports about the talks conducted by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his tour of the region indicate that no one wants to inconvenience Syria in any way, and that the Americans are ready to provide all the help needed to achieve real progress shortly after the resumption of the negotiations, expected to take place before the end of the year.

There is clearly a genuine desire among the Israelis also to achieve rapid progress. This is evident from the positions adopted by Christopher and his accompanying delegation, reflecting primarily the U.S.-Israeli agreement on this issue. It is known that the ideas proposed by the United States follow an agreement with Israel, and that an administration such as the present U.S. Administration cannot do otherwise, in view of the fact that prior agreement with Israel is part and parcel of Washington's Middle Eastern policy in this phase, as well as in most others.

It is also clear that there is an Israeli desire to help the U.S. peace team in their task. This has emerged in Shim'on Peres' admission of the regional part played by Syria and his talk of a "regional perspective" deal with it, with all its implications for Lebanon. This desire was also apparent in the Israeli suggestion, leaked to many quarters, that Peres does not want to balk at issues that he does not consider important, such as the question of the 4 June 1967 borders or the borders which existed between Syria and Palestine during the mandate.

Will all these elements, including recognition of Syria's role in Lebanon, be enough to achieve the expected breakthrough between Syria and Israel, or will Damascus try to achieve more, namely to enter the negotiations with the prior knowledge that these gains are already in its pocket and later position itself so that it can ask for more, such as recognition of its role in Iraq?

There are some who believe that such a scenario is to be expected and that there is no way that Syria will agree to be denied an Iraqi part, especially as it considers itself the Iraqi opposition's true sponsor, having offered a safe heaven all these years for the opposition, Communists, Islamists, and Kurds.

In addition it [Syria] believes that Iraq's Ba'thists cannot be far removed from it [Syria] and that they must refer to Damascus when the time comes for a change in Baghdad.

There are, however, those who believe that Syria must be content with its achievements and that its need for peace is a genuine need in the absence of any sign of collapse in the Palestinian track or a real threat to Jordan, when a year and two months have elapsed since the signing of the peace treaty with Israel without the emergence of a popular rejection of this treaty. On the contrary, people have started to adapt to the new reality that it has created.

Which line of thought will prevail? A resumption of the negotiations and then a halt, or will Syria hasten to achieve a final peace with Israel now that the Jewish state has stopped exercising the policy of expectancy, following Yitzhaq Rabin's death? That is the mystery which currently baffles many a politician. It is a real mystery that the U.S. team in charge of the peace process believes it can solve, on the premise that it has managed to convince Peres and its government's general staff, including General Ehud Baraq, of the necessity to understand Syria's circumstances and sensitivities and the decisionmaking process in Syria.

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Algeria

Islamists Suspected of Killing 8 Villagers

LD1812141495 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Suspected Islamists have killed eight people in the village of Khleila, near Algiers. They suspected these people of attempting to organize self-defense groups to protect themselves from armed groups.

Head of FIS Mission Abroad Joins Critics of GIA

MM1912111795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq and Salah Jamil: "Haddam Dissociates Himself From Islamic Group"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, London — Less than a week after the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] accused the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] of killing Mohamed Said and Abderrezak Redjam, former FIS leaders who joined the GIA last year under the so-called "unification plan," Anouar Haddam, head of the FIS Parliamentary Mission Abroad, who was close to the GIA, dissociated himself from this organization yesterday, describing its leaders as "a gang of fanatic extremists."

While Haddam stressed that the statement reflects the decisions of the "FIS Provisional National Executive Bureau," the FIS Executive Committee Abroad, headed by Rabah Kebir, said: "There is no provisional national executive bureau inside the FIS."

Haddam said in a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Washington yesterday that "the statement we issued reflects and represents the Provisional National Executive Bureau's decisions. It was issued after consultations and contacts with members of the Provisional Executive Bureau inside the country and the bureau's supporters abroad. The statement does not represent the view of a particular individual or person."

However, Djafar Houari, member of the FIS Executive Committee, has said in a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that it is wrong for Haddam to talk about "the provisional national executive bureau." He pointed out that Said and Redjam used to represent the bureau and that the bureau "was assimilated into the GIA."

Houari added: "We prefer that Haddam speak through the FIS Executive Committee Abroad. Because speaking through the provisional national executive bureau would mean that there is another FIS." Houari believes that the quarter intended in the statement is the "Algerianization" tendency, which Said headed. However, the FIS leader welcomed Haddam's statement, saying "we hope that he will return to the FIS fold."

The statement issued by Haddam said that "Said and Redjam were treacherously and unjustly killed with a group of FIS leaders by sinful hands that usurped the leadership of the framework the FIS had thought was a framework for the jihad in Algeria, namely the GIA."

The statement — which was issued a week after some parties from the FIS Executive Committee blamed Haddam for what happened to the two shaykhs, accusing him of "not taking a clear position toward the GIA and its excesses, which violate the Shari'ah — added that "the GIA killed them under a plot designed to eliminate those maintaining the FIS' authentic line." It also said: "We strongly condemned this criminal act and dissociate ourselves from that gang of fanatic extremists."

The statement went on to say: "And to remain loyal to the FIS' authentic line, for the sake of which its leaders have sacrificed their lives, its Provisional National Executive Bureau has decided to urge all the mujahidin who are loyal to its authentic line to continue the blessed jihad aloof from extremism and the extremists who seized the leadership of the GIA framework, not to heed the orders of these extremists, to continue their political action, and to continue to confront any aggression against innocent people, whatever the justifications."

Egypt

Mubarak Addresses Parliamentary Session

NC1712082595 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1012 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Speech by President Husni Mubarak to the joint session of the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council at the People's Assembly Hall in Cairo — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Brother and sister members of the People's Assembly and Consultative Council. It is with God's blessing and guidance that your esteemed assembly starts its first session following elections in which the Egyptian people expressed their free will and in which all the national, legitimate, and democratic parties took part. Your esteemed assembly embodies the people's ambitions and hopes.

We are looking with hope and aspiration toward a new parliament that will enrich the democratic action process, strengthen the homeland's renaissance, and increase its ability to face the 21st century's challenges. I believe that all of you will live up to the confidence of the masses which have given you the honor of representing them so that you will carry on their behalf

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the burden of the noble task of being the nation's deputies who guard its interests, defend its unity, and express its national conscience.

I would like to congratulate each one of you for the people's precious confidence in you. I wish your esteemed assembly all possible success as it starts a new legislative session which we hope will be a new sign of the stability of our parliamentary life.

Among the achievements of the former assembly were completion of the legislative infrastructure which laid down the legal basis for the largest transformation in Egypt's history. This transformation moved the national economy to the threshold of a new age when it rectified its structural imbalance, removed the restrictions that impeded its course, gave it the opportunity to utilize all the resources, and gave the private sector and national capital limitless scope for action in order to contribute to the development efforts.

In addition, the assembly played an important role in supervising the government's actions. This led to the rationalization and rectification of many of the executive authority's decisions. That task could never be belittled especially when the deputies were bound in their duties by the public interest.

Your esteemed assembly now comes as an expression of the people's determination at this critical stage to continue the process of building and thus increase the opportunities for the people's participation, enhance our democratic system, propel the development efforts into new horizons and higher rates, and take Egypt into the 21st century.

The recent elections were held in a fully democratic climate. Egypt's judges were the ones most enthusiastic on seeing justice upheld and the ones most determined to apply the law. With their presence, there was absolutely no need to have another authority, either from here or from abroad, to supervise the elections out of respect for our fair and independent judiciary. [applause]

The great enthusiasm to be nominated as manifested by the record increase in the number of candidates in the electoral districts, the increasing presence of the voters in front of the ballot boxes in towns and cities, and the hot competition that characterized the battle in most districts are all healthy and deeply significant phenomena. They underlined the people's role in strengthening the democratic process. They also underlined the masses' increased desire to be part of the process and to abandon indifference from their confidence in the usefulness of participation and in the importance of their votes.

I have always believed that democracy flourishes through responsible participation. This responsible participation protects national action from the dangers of division, ensures the deserved representation of all views, and provides the opportunity for creative interaction between different views in order to attain the most ideal solutions. It turns democracy into a strong barrier against its enemies. Without responsible participation, it would be difficult to build bridges of mutual confidence and to reach a national accord which ensures that everybody will rally behind the homeland's supreme interests.

It is from this premise that I have always been eager to let everybody participate on equal footing without differentiating between a supporter, an opponent, or an independent because they are all various tributaries to Egyptian nationalism and because the masses alone have the final word. They alone give their confidence to those they believe are qualified to represent them, without any watchdogs or censors.

It is also from this premise that I have constantly urged every citizen to participate, vote in full freedom, and let the homeland's interest be his motivation when voting, so that he will choose the best candidates who can really represent Egypt and its hopes regardless of this citizen's party affiliation. The widespread participation of the masses is the best guarantee for having proper parliamentary representation that reflects the nation's spirit and conscience.

This participation is the ideal way for correcting the course of our partisan life in a way that will bring the parties closer to the masses and more committed to their interests and ambitions. If you remember, my only demand was that the election should be purely Egyptian in its essence and in the objectives sought from it so that the parliamentary representation would be an Egyptian national action that would fulfill the homeland's objectives and aims. I was not concerned about the size of the majority or the opposition because, as far as I am concerned, both of them are patriotic sides jointly responsible for the success of the democratic process. Democracy prospers and grows only when there is a national and responsible opposition that is committed to the protection of the homeland's supreme interests regardless of its policies. [applause]

We are the ones with the deepest faith in the role of the opposition because we firmly believe that the homeland belongs to everybody. It is uplifted by the constructive dialogue between all national and democratic forces which reaches a common denominator for achieving the homeland's objectives, protecting its interests, and

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ensuring that the process will continue along the right course that enhances democracy and progress.

I am confident that your esteemed assembly will be the forum for a free national dialogue with a multitude of views and opinions in the search for the best solutions within the framework of correct parliamentary traditions that protect the opposition's right to voice its view freely and provide the majority with the opportunity to impartially benefit from counter opinion; because the truth is not the monopoly of any particular side and because the opposing view can shed light on the picture and light the way for us.

The problems we are facing are naturally national ones which concern every Egyptian man and woman. The responsibility for handling them lies with everyone, the majority and opposition alike. Your esteemed assembly's key role is defined in this framework through a serious study of all dimensions of our national problems which top the list of the people's priorities. The assembly's key role is also defined in exploring the available alternatives as possible solutions to such problems. The Assembly's task is to learn about all sides of these problems in a systematic and objective way, taking into consideration the surrounding circumstances and existing capabilities.

There should be no excessive imagination or desires, the necessities of reality should not be ignored, and personal or factional interests that contradict public interest should not be pursued. A serious examination of the dimensions of the existing problems is what guarantees success for your supervisory and legislative work. A sound knowledge reveals disorders and shortcomings, i luminates the road to reform, and guarantees compatibility between legislation and the circumstances and requirements of the actual situation.

Brothers and sisters, deputies of the people, the people have granted you their trust and votes for you to be the nation's deputies representing its national conscience. I believe, Gomovement, "referring to the previous dismissals of Khadr Muhjiz and Mahmud AbuNd willing, you will measure up to the people's trust because representing the nation is a noble national mission. No one can carry out this mission, except the loyal ones who are not lured by whim and interest.

You represent the entire people. Your accountable role is to be always on the side of their interests, expressing their hopes and aspirations without bias toward narrow factional interests that overwhelm the public interest. The people are looking forward to a serious parliamentary performance that deepens their trust in their assembly and deputies and rises to the level of challenges which will face Egypt at the beginning of the next century.

The people are looking forward for a courageous performance focusing on basic issues that concern the masses and proposing suitable policies and solutions in the context of a sincere nationalistic concept. This concept should effect a balance between the interests of various factions of the people, encouraging a society of producers, and preserving the ties of social peace.

Scoring stands and delivering fiery speeches are no longer enough. This is because the responsibility is shared by everyone and the challenges are grave. No matter what the reasons for our differences and factionalism, certain important requirements impose on us all to take off the cloak of factionalism, to close ranks and unite forces in the face of the challenges threatening the nation's interests and security.

This is the true concept of democracy and this is the significance of having various national parties, whose policies differ but they eventually contribute to the nationalistic trend. It is not patriotism when some parties turn their newspapers to podiums inciting violence, encouraging terrorism, and falsely leveling charges against everyone so as to create a seditious climate filled with the smell of deadly poisons. Also it is not patriotism when some people's voices echo the sound of foreign forces which are publicly hostile to Egypt and make their countries hideouts for groups who practice violence and terrorism.

I am speaking about a minority that does not realize its national responsibilities. For the thin line that separates democracy and chaos is demonstrated by the responsible awareness of the importance of establishing dividing lines between what is legitimate and what is forbidden, between free and responsible words that reflect a sense of national conscience that safeguards the rights and freedoms of others and the malignant words that reflect an evil spirit whose goal is to incite demagogic violence without any consideration to the homeland's interests and security. We accept the rule of [illegible] law on the stands of those who squander the rights of their homeland, however, this will not shake our firm belief that democracy is our only option and path toward building a homeland capable of living up to its challenges.

Brothers and sisters: We are not in a dispute with any individual in this homeland, regardless of how excessive his thoughts and opinion may be, but we are against those who undermine the homeland's interests and carry out acts of terrorism, in implementation of external schemes. That the primary role of these schemes is forming and financing terrorist groups is beyond doubt.

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The recent conspiracies have proved for certain that we are facing hired groups whose profession is crime and whose clear goal is to destroy and destabilize society and obstruct its progress to benefit external powers that use these stray remnants to serve their sinful schemes, however, these conspiracies have proved that Egypt becomes united in a solid national bloc in times of danger and challenge. Egyptians categorically and firmly refuse any link between these groups and religion, because religion means mercy, compassion, cohesion, and easiness. Its grand message is to guide mankind and develop nations, not to sabotage or destroy them or kill people.

Brothers and sisters: I call on all Egyptians to be cautious, alert, and cohesive so that we may be an impregnable barrier repulsing these groups and preventing the recurrence of their actions. I call on democratic and national parties to realize their responsibilities and to stand firmly and decisively against these groups as well as their advocates and supporters, who use democracy as a cover behind which they encourage violence and terrorism. I also call on security agencies to remain highly alert and cautious to block all sources of terrorism. These agencies have proved that they are at the highest level of performance and preparedness [applause] and that, thank God, they are capable of foiling all criminal schemes and nipping them in the bud to safeguard the security of the people and the homeland. The great sacrifices made by the valiant policemen [applause] to strike at these criminal schemes deserve our utmost appreciation and respect. Let us salute the heroic police martyrs [applause] who sacrificed their souls to provide security and safety for every citizen on the good land of Egypt. We salute their noble and sincere efforts that have resulted in great success that is obvious for everyone to see and that is recognized by the entire world.

Uprooting terrorism requires the continued efforts of all factions and elements in the society, so that the efforts of the institutions and parties can be pooled together in a constant political action to heal the wounds, eliminate the cause of the problem, and terminate terrorism once and for all.

Brothers and sisters, the Egyptian democratic process will continue with confident steps. It will protect its gains, deepen its course, and open wide new horizons. We are stressing the need for vigilance and caution because we want this process to succeed and to attain its objectives without suffering any setbacks. The obstacles are many and the enemies of democracy are lying in wait for it. Good intentions alone are not on their own a guarantee for reaching our right objectives.

Democracy is our end and means. It is the regime's policy and the key to progress, but democracy means responsible partnership between the individual and the state and between the parties and the regime. It is within this clear framework that rights and duties are linked and that freedom and responsibility converge in a clearly stated national charter based on respect for legitimacy and rule of law.

Democracy cannot advance if the parties do not flourish because parties are the school for political action and the arena for national action which helps educate the future cadres. They formulate the national traditions in accordance with clear principles that confirm loyalty to the supreme national interest, respect for counter opinions, and acceptance of the masses' decision because the nation is the source of all authorities. [applause]

Democracy cannot advance in the absence of stability because the latter is the pillar on which a civilized community is based. Its members' responsibilities are defined according to the constitution which draws the line between what is permissible and what is not. Every citizen who deserves the honor of belonging to this homeland should understand that protecting the country's overall national security is the individual's and society's most sacred duty. Subjecting national security to any danger means harming the whole national entity and subjecting it to fragmentation and collapse; therefore, all the citizens should give protection to this national security priority over all the state's institutions in order to protect the nation's human and material resources and the bond between individuals living in our country who believe that they have the same fate and identical interests.

This is the reason for our interest in developing the Egyptian Armed Forces' capabilities and resources. [applause] They are Arab Egypt' shield, the guardian of our security and holy places, the protector of our rights and resources, and the deterrent to anyone who thinks of harming Egypt or threatening its security and safety. They are the force that supports every Arab people facing threats or aggression because we believe in the unity of Arab security. [applause] Greetings to the Egyptian Armed Forces men. [applause] Greetings to these men who have not hesitated to sacrifice their lives and blood for the homeland and the people and who have led the ranks in all instances of sacrifice, thus writing with their noble blood the greatest epics of sacrifice and setting an example of true martyrdom and death for the sake of the homeland and the people.

Brothers and sisters, our economic conditions at the beginning of the last decade needed total reassessment in view of the developments that had occurred in the

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economic sphere at home and abroad and the persistence of several crushing problems. It became necessary to explore these problems' root causes and think of radical solutions for them in an objective way based on a realistic examination of the facts in order to propose alternative methods to remedy the shortcomings in both the short and long term.

This total reassessment made it necessary to tackle certain factors which lay outside the sphere of the economy in its narrow sense and formed part of the state's general policies including social and other policies.

Since the need to raise the ordinary Egyptian citizens' living standards has been my prime concern since I assumed responsibility, I took care to pool the resources of all available Egyptian economic experts to formulate an integrated economic growth strategy. These people were also required to draw up the guidelines for a 20-year program, divided into successive five-year plans. Starting from this point, the basic long-term principles focused on three fronts: first, boosting the Egyptian economy's intrinsic ability to finance economic development; second, continuing to repair and provide backup for the country's social and physical infrastructure; and third, regarding the demographic and geographical dimensions as fundamental factors in the economic development process.

At top of all this was our basic goal of raising living standards. The first five-year plan, 1982/1983-1986/1987, was naturally remedial. It primarily sought to strike a balance between the national economy's sectors by increasing the growth rate, maintaining this higher rate, and basically relying on the production of commodities. This was done to fuel continuing growth, create new jobs, boost the infrastructure sectors — particularly energy, construction, transport, and communications — repair the balance of payments deficit, and link material growth with real development of the human sector through manpower management, training, education, and encouragement of domestic and foreign private investment to facilitate the efforts of those who wished to participate in the development process.

Thanks to enduring and stable economic growth throughout the 1980's and in the last five years, we were able to implement an immense investment program costing approximately 328 billion pounds. The public and private sectors cooperated with the government in this endeavor that involved the basic infrastructure, services, and the production sector.

Whereas in the past the investment burden had fallen almost totally on the government and the public sector, the private sector this time participated, seeing its share steadily grow until it reached more than 50 percent this year.

On this occasion I wish to note the role played by the Egyptian private sector, especially in the manufacturing sector, not only because of its rising contributions to higher production and the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs but also because of its increasing understanding of its social responsibility and its voluntary extension of relief aid to citizens suffering from the effects of natural disasters.

Brothers and sisters, the issue was not limited to boosting development, accumulating investments, and setting up basic infrastructure, but was accompanied by the implementation of a comprehensive economic reform program whose gradual effects influenced economic and social developments. These gradual effects were calculated and, hence, ensured the program's stability and effectiveness. The program succeeded in reducing the budget deficit to its lowest level to the extent of becoming not worth mentioning. The deficit in the current trade balance turned into a surplus. The ownership base was expanded and the capital market was set in motion.

This program, its essence, and the way it was implemented remained a purely Egyptian course. We were primarily guided in its inception and implementation by the interest of this struggling people. In this program, we looked at our unique social conditions and the future of our coming generations without stopping for long on the experiences of other countries who had different conditions and situations and who were ready to carry out what they were told to do even if that was beyond their capabilities and resources.

You know that I was keen that the economic reform program should not exceed the ordinary citizen's ability to endure the burdens. This is why I insisted that it should be implemented over a relatively long period of time and not to have it achieved in leaps and bounds that would burden the budget of the Egyptian family earner. We are exerting our utmost efforts to enhance the citizen's ability to face life's burdens and costs. His burdens and troubles will remain our primary concern and fundamental commitment. [applause] Consolidation of social justice in Egypt will continue to be a principal pillar of the regime's legitimacy.

Brothers and sisters, we can now state without exaggeration that the door of hope is open to each one of us and to the entire Egyptian society now that the conditions and factors needed to increase local production and increase production have been provided. This huge asset of the basic infrastructure, the modern production and services base, and the positive partnership of the

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public and private sectors will maintain the rhythm of this move forward.

More important than this is the determination and resolution of the solid labor base of which we are proud [applause]. This base has constantly proved its competence to shoulder the responsibility and its ability to do its duty in all conditions regardless of the hardships involved. It has always maintained the highest level of awareness and recognition of national responsibility, therefore, we will always remain proud of the slogan "Made in Egypt and by the hands of Egypt's noble sons." [applause] This realization of the value of work and the workers' role were behind our insistence on creating new job opportunities with all our might and on creating these new opportunities in productive fields in order to achieve the objective of doubling production. We succeeded in creating around 5 million new jobs for the toiling sons of Egypt during the past 14 years.

I would like to stress here that sponsorship of national industries will continue while trade is being liberalized [applause], at least during the transitional stage so that these industries can consolidate themselves and be able to face international competition.

Within the policy of economic openness to the outside world, we seek to consolidate our relations with all international groups without restrictions or barriers. Toward that end, we signed a partnership agreement with the United States in 1994 with a view to strengthening bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade, development, investment, and the transfer of technology. We are also conducting extensive negotiations with the EU to bolster cooperation with its member states in all fields. In the meantime, a discussion of regional cooperation programs among the Middle East countries is under way to achieve a kind of positive cooperation that runs parallel to the comprehensive settlement efforts and serves the common interests of the region's countries in the fields of transport, telecommunications, energy, and tourism, however, it must be clear to everybody that the regional cooperation programs and the partnership programs being discussed with various international groups are no substitute for the inter-Arab economic cooperation programs [applause], which we will continue to exert tremendous efforts to find a suitable formula for reviving and increasing their effectiveness.

Brothers and sisters, the world is the scene of immense economic, social, and political activity. This activity is marked by the existence of a number of economic blocs that affect the international economy as well as each country's tendency to achieve higher rates of socioeconomic development to raise the standard of living of its citizens and augment its competitiveness. It is the responsibility of thinkers and economists to look toward the future and its prospects to explore the horizons of desired progress to be able to catch up with the age and benefit from the modern revolution in production methods, telecommunications, technologies, the advances made in genetic science, the progress in the labor, production, education, and training systems. This would provide the human, financial, and economic resources that are capable of absorbing these technologies and offering opportunities for competitiveness at the international level. We all must pledge to make the coming decade an important decade for stabilizing the era of progression and self-propulsion in Egypt.

Proceeding from the great accomplishments made, taking advantage of the economic reform program, and in continuation of the development efforts, the development strategy in the coming years seeks to achieve a great turn in the Egyptian society and economy [applause]. Emphasis will be placed on the need to improve the conditions of Egyptians by steadily increasing their standards of living and providing wide opportunities for their education, training, medical, social, and cultural care to increase their dedication, innovation, and creativity. Toward that end, the following means will be pursued:

1. Raising the growth rate to become three times as much as the population growth rate within the coming five-year plan. This would raise the per capita income to 150 percent of what it is at present.

2. Creating new jobs that increase year after year, beginning with approximately 500,000 new jobs next year. This rate will increase by approximately 100,000 jobs every year. The maximum number of these jobs will be created in the industrial sector, since industry represents the main pillar of development. In addition, more jobs will result from the distribution of new land to graduates, the provincial development programs in all parts of the country, and the grand national projects, such as the national project for the development of Sinai, the national project for rural development, and the national project for the development of the northern part of the Gulf of Suez, and other grand projects.

3. Improving the efficiency of the exploitation of our water resources.

Fourth, enlarging the manufacturing sector by a real growth rate of more than 10 percent annually during the fourth five-year plan so that the total produce will more than double by the end of the plan and industrial exports can rise to threefold their current volume.

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5. Boosting the tourist industry in view of the fact that it is a primary source of national revenue and a fertile area for attracting domestic and foreign investments.

6. Increasing electric power output to a level that can guarantee its availability to all industrial, agricultural, and home uses in the cities, villages, and communities. The provision of sufficient electric power to the villages will guarantee full rural development.

7. Continuing the current improvement of the existing road, rail, and telephone networks.

8. Continuing the current surge in housing projects as much as our resources allow to provide a home for every new family and solve one of the hardest problems facing the citizens, particularly young people and the low-income groups. Similarly the improvement and development of poor neighborhoods will continue with special care to eliminate haphazard construction and its attendant social, economic, and security problems. [applause]

9. Extending the potable water network to all villages and other residential complexes and extending sewage networks to all towns and large villages.

10. Abolishing the multiple-shift school system with the aim of attaining a full-day educational period, reducing the number of students per class in all educational stages, using modern educational methods, developing the curricula, and improving the conditions of the personnel employed in the educational sector. [applause]

11. Modernizing the universities so that they can keep abreast with fresh scientific developments while concentrating on research and linking it with the requirements of economic and social development. [applause]

12. Improving the standard of health services with special emphasis on preventive medicine, eliminating epidemics and endemic diseases, providing special health care to densely populated areas, and extending the medical insurance scheme to all students and government employees.

13. Facilitating litigation procedures for the citizens by using modern filing methods for court cases and documents.

14. Implementing a rural development program in all the country's villages without exception by increasing the government's efforts in this sphere and assisting the contributions made by the citizens while giving them a leading role in planning this development.

Brothers and sisters, members of the People's Assembly and Consultative Council, from the pulpit of your venerable assembly, I tell you clearly and repeatedly that the government's subsidy of basic food commodities will not stop. [applause] We will not abandon the free education system but we will, indeed, increase public expenditure on education, health, and potable water supplies year after year. [applause] This is the state's role which it must not abandon or neglect. Our national peace is linked to our ability, all of us, to satisfy the Egyptian masses' basic needs.

The accomplishment of this ambitious program requires, in addition to completing the reform process, focusing on economic goals that have to be achieved. With logic, work, and finance, we must all contribute to achieving these goals.

We may summarize these goals in the following:

1. Increasing Egypt's share in world trade in terms of exports and imports so that we may be able to operate the available production resources and create new additional resources to absorb hundreds of thousands of people seeking jobs;

2. Upgrading the level of services designed for economic projects as well as for the public;

3. Continuing to provide the minimal level of care and support for people with limited income;

4. Introducing tangible and lasting improvement to the government agencies' services and performance in all ministries and all governorates; and

5. Achieving further success and control over the population growth.

Brothers and sisters, these ambitious goals could be achieved through a consensus on implementing various tasks with everyone's contribution. The government's main role will be the creation of favorable circumstances to realize these goals and the provision of necessary resources. I believe that the ministers, each one in his own field, will share with you this responsibility to devise programs and policies needed for this accomplishment and introduce the required amendments to some legislations.

Having done that, we will have to conduct an urgent assessment of the privileges of and impediments to investment in Egypt. We also have to propose a system to quickly achieve what is required in order to remove the obstacles and provide better conditions that will encourage more investment.

In a very simple way, the issue is that if we want to create 700,000 job opportunities annually on the average, this has to be achieved by expanding the establishment of new projects, be they major, medium, or small. The true criterion for achievements and for judging the performance of the state agencies in the next

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phase will basically be the number of newly established projects, the number of workers employed in such projects, and development of exports to world markets.

The government has undertaken to provide 1000 million pounds annually to offer easy-term loans for youths to expand the existing small projects or to establish new projects. It has been decided to provide 5 billion pounds for the youths' projects in the next five years at the rate of 1 billion pounds per year.

I do not need to reiterate that the state is also committed to looking after low-income people. This is a basic element in the philosophy of government and a safety valve for the society's peace and stability. Although the price of wheat doubled this year compared to last year, our subsidy of bread and other food supplies continued and will continue. [applause] We will also continue to support health services, baby milk, law electricity consumption, pure drinking water, and public transport.

This year, a new program of social solidarity will also be launched. It seeks to provide integrated welfare for limited-income people by guaranteeing them minimum monthly salaries and using their capabilities in family production projects to increase their actual income. This move will be bolstered by the genuine sympathy and solidarity shown by the able sons of this nation, when they voluntarily extended aid to the victims of the earthquake and floods and made initiatives to assist the needy citizens. [applause]

I trust that Egypt will move into the 21st century with an advanced democratic system, with a development rate four times as much as the population growth rate, and with every citizen having an opportunity for an honorable job that considerably adds to the national product. This is not the responsibility of the state alone; it is the responsibility of the entire society: The executive power, the legislative power, the universities, the planning and scientific research institutes, and all citizens concerned about the dignity of our towering Egypt.

Dear brothers and sisters, in this delicate stage of man's history, the world is witnessing deep and extremely important developments that will undoubtedly have repercussions and reflections on the overall international relations and on the present and future role of many countries, especially those that bear special responsibilities in the various regions of the world and enjoy special weight in their regions. No fair, objective, and scientific observer can deny that Egypt is one of these countries, with a prominent role and an advanced position. This is dictated by the facts of history, geography, and strategic considerations. Egypt's regional and international role is decided by Egypt and its sisterly Arab countries, which have the same objective and fate as Egypt. It is not a role dictated, suggested, or granted by a foreign force. [applause]

Throughout history, Egypt has been fated to play a lofty cultural role and a special pioneering responsibility. The decision to play that role and to bear that responsibility, despite the burden, has been made by the great Egyptian people on their own accord and free will. God willing, this role will never stop until the doomsday. [applause]

On the international level, Egypt is extending bridges of cooperation to all peoples without exception. It is seeking to create an international situation that has the prerequisites of constancy and stability.

On the Arab level, Egypt is playing a fundamental role in formulating the basis for the pan-Arab existence and elements of comprehensive pan-Arab security. It is also seeking to formulate a clear concept of common Arab interests.

The Arab nation has the basic elements that enable it to mobilize its resources and capabilities to protect its pan-Arab security and defend its fundamental interests. These basic elements also provide it with the ability to overcome its problems, confront the challenges impeding its course, and overcome the transient situations in its history.

The Arab nation must continue its progress so as to have more achievements regardless of obstacles and impediments, especially in fields that concern the nation's vital interests, such as proceeding with the course of Arab reconciliation, providing the objective conditions for achieving it, reaching an agreement on the Arab honor charter, reviving the Arab League's role, resolving Arab disputes through cordial means and within the context of a single family, preventing any disputes in the future, and commitment to a nonaggression pact to which all the Arab countries are bound when facing each other.

It is an undisputed fact that the Arab nation made its decision when it opted for the policy of comprehensive and just peace and for adopting it as a constant course and a firm policy in dealing with all countries and states. But it should be understood that the peace we accept and work for is the comprehensive one that covers all the Middle East and does not exclude a country or people. We all have the same fate. [applause]

I do not need to note here the extreme importance we pin on achieving quick and concrete progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. We are fully confident that the fraternal peoples in Syria and Lebanon are serious in choosing peace as their policy and course, for arranging the situation in the region without delay or hesitation.

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We hope that the new Israeli government will activate the peaceful efforts with full determination and resolution to protect the peace and strengthen the hand of the forces of reconciliation and coexistence against the elements of extremism and blind bigotry.

In addition to this, we are looking toward the scrupulous implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement signed in Taba and then in Washington in September so as to pave the way for embarking on negotiations on the final status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and on the future of Jerusalem. [applause]

Moving to the African sphere, there are still major issues of interest to Africans and the OAU in particular. Among these issues are the need to double the efforts being made to achieve economic integration, reach a fair and realistic settlement for the debt problem, and consolidate peace and stability in Africa through the mechanism to resolve the disputes between the continent's countries. In this respect, this mechanism is now being used to resolve Ethiopia's complaint against the Sudanese government. We are paying great attention to this issue because it focuses on the Sudanese government's involvement in policies based on sponsoring terrorism, exporting it to neighboring countries, and getting involved in plots with suspicious foreign forces in implementation of extremely dangerous schemes. These policies have turned Sudan from a good neighbor into a state that brings death, bloodshed, and fright to the innocent. The fraternal Sudanese people can never accept this situation. This people has a long history of kindness and commitment to noble values and principles. We support the twin Sudanese people in their rejection of these satanic schemes [applause]

On the broader level, the international community responded positively to our repeated calls for the adoption of a firm stance to end the tragedy in Bosnia and confront the atrocities committed by the Serb forces under criminal racist slogans. Thus, we welcome the peace agreement reached in the United States on 21 November among the disputing parties. The U.S. Administration played an active role in reaching that agreement, a role that contributed to achieving the desired goal. The European countries have also begun to play a responsible and effective role in confronting the threat which could have spread to all parts of the Balkan region. The European Community adopted a stance commensurate with the dangerous situation at the Paris Conference held two days ago. During that conference the disputing parties signed an agreement to end this tragedy in the presence of the representatives of the European and Islamic Liaison Groups, who will participate in supervising implementation of this agreement.

There is no need for me to put on record Egypt's contribution to steering efforts in this direction and the role it played, which was not confined to political and diplomatic moves. Egypt played an honorable role through its armed forces in the arena of honor and duty [applause]. With this role, Egypt added a great deal to its glorious history and magnificent march.

Brothers and sisters: This is Egypt's image in the near future in light of the tremendous achievements attained in the past few years and the massive efforts that will continue until 2000. We hope that 2000 will be a stepping-stone toward achieving a major qualitative leap to place Egypt among the nations that are more capable of coping with the procession of progress. We must all realize that we are at the threshold of a new era where there is a place only for those who can cope with progress. The most specific characteristics of this ere are skilled workmanship, quality, creativity and inventiveness, association of knowledge with production, ability to compete in foreign markets, and the need to concert international efforts to fight the plague of terrorism. These necessities dictate that we rise up to this great challenge.

We have no doubt that Egypt, God willing, will attain its goals irrespective of the attempts of the elements of evil and conspiracy to block its march and foil its progress. We will reach our goals because we seek the progress and dignity of the homeland and people. All we want is well-being, progress, and the peace and security of the homeland. We want progress and prosperity in our homeland and to uphold the rights of every Egyptian citizen. Egypt will reach its goal and no one can obstruct its march, "And God Hath full power and control over His affairs" "And God certainly will aid those who aid His cause" [Koranic verses]. Egypt will attain its goals because it is the march of a noble people, who waged fierce battles and borne great sacrifices and struggled to occupy a lofty place in the procession of human progress. No one can mislead the people because the people know their right path. No one can deviate the people from their goals because these goals are crystal clear. Egypt, God willing, will reach its goal because the people's will derives from God's. The people want a secure and safe homeland that supports peace, a lofty and courageous homeland that extends a hand of cooperation and friendship to everyone. The people want a strong and proud homeland capable of fulfilling the requirements of its sons.

My pledge to you was to build a cohesive society guided by faith and science, a society of producers that rises above grudge and hatred. A society that unleashes the potential of its sons and enables all gifted and able people to develop and prosper. My pledge to you was

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to build a new society where the people are free of fear so that we may establish a strong democracy based on sound participation that safeguards the rights of individuals and groups in an accurate balance.

Brothers and sisters, It has been my pledge to you that we will build together a caring society sympathetic to the unable people and embracing the rights of the overwhelming majority of our working people. The aim is for Egypt to remain a unified nationalist whole not amenable to sedition and division. This has been my pledge and my vow to you and, God willing, we will keep it.

These are goals on which we all agreed and undertook to achieve. They have been devised through a collective national consensus stretching to every spot of Egypt's steadfast land. We will continue to realize these goals with hope, deeds, thinking, action, young hands, impeccable and live consciences, piercing vision, strong will, close union, collective social solidarity, belief in God, and loyalty to the country.

We will not be deterred from pursuing the march by the conspiracy of a stray and evil clique whose motives are known to us. This is because we have dedicated ourselves to a sacred mission that demands sincere faith, brave heart, confidence in the support of a great nation which distinguishes between right and wrong and between the right path and perversion.

As we have always did, all of us will continue to fight perversion and corruption and to have faith in and courage for sacrifices. We will not relinquish any right, we will not tolerate any wrongdoing, and we will not hesitate to perform our duty. Our only goal and desire is for the nation's flags to fly high over a strong society that restores its standing with thinking, action, knowledge, and faith so that Egypt will remain a beacon of civilization and tolerance shedding its light on the world.

We have successfully completed the greater part of a hard and difficult process so as to be more qualified to deal with a new age. We have overcome numerous difficulties and faced ferocious challenges to restore the country's ability to stand up in extremely difficult circumstances. These circumstances have been interlinked with many incidental elements, in addition to the conspiracy of terrorist groups which disobeyed God and became embroiled in betraying the country.

We have experienced a time when the treasury was empty and the public sector was at its last breath. The burden of debts and their interest were beyond our ability to repay and the basic utilities were broken down and vacant. The country was deprived of national capitals that fled outside. Daily we were faced with shortage of commodities and hard currencies, breakdown of sewage networks both in poor and rich districts, electrical power cuts, scarce drinking water, and continuous breakdown of the transport network.

Brothers and sisters, I thank God that the situation has changed radically, thanks to a noble nation whose steadfastness and scarifies had the greatest impact on the success of the reform process. [applause]

I had full confidence that the people who achieved the great October victory in the most difficult circumstances [applause] will be able to overcome their crisis and manage to lay down a sound groundwork for a comprehensive progress. This progress is based on a joint responsibility shared by the country and the citizens, by society and its institutions, and by the state and individuals.

I thank God that the greatest transition in Egypt's history has occurred through three unparalleled means. The government's philosophy developed toward further freedom and democracy and the government's economic policy changed in line with the requirements of this age. All this took place in the context of a new nationalistic concept which unleashed and unshackled the country's resources and preserved the society's unity and cohesion. It restored the trust between the citizens and the state and tackled the shortcomings of a long previous era. It also restored prestige to Egyptian patriotism which represents our greatest incentive to carry out the task of development.

With Egyptian patriotism, Egypt has surpassed its difficulties, unified its ranks, and overcome all hardships and predicaments. With Egyptian patriotism, Egypt will realize its hopes, protect its march, and serve its goals on which there is national consensus.

Thanks to God for He is the arbiter between us and our people because we only seek rectification. Our path is as clear as a straight line and our sacrifice is purely for God. We spare no effort for the good of the country and do not deviate from the goal no matter how difficult the road.

Our goal is to build a country united by brotherhood and justice, a country that supports the productive people and embraces the creative ones. A country in which rights and duties are balanced, a country free of animosity and malice and enjoys solidarity and compassion.

Egypt deserves our love and sacrifices as it deserved our martyrs in the battles of war and peace. I implore Almighty God to guide us, support us on the path of right, and grant us resolve and rectitude in pursuit of

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our objective. God is our best support. May God grant us all success. Peace be upon you. [applause]

People's Assembly Election Results Analyzed

NC1612173595 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 11 Dec 95 pp 9-11

[Article by ROSE AL-YUSUF editorial staff: "Gangster Types Decided the Election Battle"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The results of the People's Assembly elections are deceptive and misleading. The National Democratic Party's [NDP] 94-percent share of the seats does not mean that the Egyptian public has decided to bestow on it all its loyalty and adulation. Neither does the opposition's 2.2-percent share mean that its role has ended and that it has been buried for good.

The entire process requires reassessment by all parties concerned. It is sufficient to say that the NDP and the opposition together wasted a golden opportunity to exercise democracy in a better way. Together they succeeded in parading all their defects and negative attributes.

The NDP's success was real but the opposition failure was real enough. [sentence as published] The opposition satisfied itself by repeating the litany of forgery and vote rigging.

This might be true in one aspect of the process but it is false in many other aspects, namely, that the political parties shrank and vanished like a snowball in hot weather. These parties had imagined that their role was limited to publishing newspapers that acted as their mouthpieces. These newspapers inflated the political parties's sense of their own power and the political parties believed what their own papers said. They invented the lie and then believed it. As a result they turned into paper tigers.

Now in all elections there is some meddling, pressures are exercised, and ploys are employed. The question is: How much did these pressures affect the final outcome?

The Wafd Party nominated 182 candidates of whom six were elected; the Labor Party nominated 120 candidates of whom none were elected; the Liberal Party nominated 61 candidates of whom only one was elected; the Arab Democratic Nasirite Party nominated 43 of whom one was elected; and the National Progressive Unionist Grouping [NPUG] nominated 40 of whom five were elected.

A careful examination of this outcome shows that NPUG obtained the best results; the Labor Party fared the worst. The Wafd Party got six seats out of 182 candidates: This is a danger signal to the largest opposition party which formerly had far more power and influence, obtaining 30 seats in the parliament before the last election, although at that time it claimed that the elections had been rigged. The Wafd was supposed to get at least 30 seats this time. Actually it lost the elections in many constituencies even before the voting began.

The Wafd chose Yasin Siraj-al-Din as its leading candidate. Nevertheless the chances of his failure exceeded those of his success, particularly in the final days before the runoff election. It is certain that the government's passive backing — by the elimination of its candidate in the first round — saved the opposition leader from a big defeat before his strong rival Dr. Husam Badrawi. Even in the final minutes of the vote count in his constituency's 107 ballot boxes, the battle had not yet been decided. Siraj-al-Din's fate was decided only by the last three ballot boxes.

During the runoff election the NDP must have felt that the final result would be catastrophic if a parliament completely devoid of opposition seats was elected. It therefore hastened to back some opposition candidates. ROSE AL-YUSUF correspondent Muhammad al-Dab' noticed that NDP vehicles were cruising the streets of Qasr al-Nil constituency to support Yasin Siraj-al-Din. 'Abd-al-'Aziz Mustafa, the candidate for the workers seat in the same constituency, used the votes of his supporters, namely insurance company employees, to boost Siraj-al-Din's chances.

The NDP also hastened to salvage the chances of other opposition candidates in other places. It helped Fu'ad al-Badrawi in al-Daqahliyah's Nabaruh constituency when he ran against businessman Hamad al-Tuhami, an independent candidate.

In the 'Abidin constituency the claims made by Rajab Hilal Hamidah that he received promises from NDP leaders to help him win a seat were true. As to the Arab Democratic Nasirite Party, negotiations stopped between it and the NDP to help it win three seats in the runoff. Apparently there was disagreement over this share.

Another landmark in these elections was the fact that the traditional figures lost and new figures appeared. While Diya' Dawud failed, Samih 'Ashur came to the forefront. Ayman Nur won a seat but 'Ali Salamah and Munir Fakhri 'Abd-al-Nur failed. Other unsuccessful candidates were former parliamentary dignitaries, whose voices had often been heard under the People's Assembly dome: [Labor Party leader] Ibrahim Shukri, Fikri al-Jazzar, Kamal Khalid, Jalal Gharib, Faruq Mutawalli, and Dr. Ibrahim 'Awarah.

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It is rumored that the NDP is considering appointing Ibrahim Shukri to the new Assembly [Shukri subsequently was not given one of the 10 parliamentary seats traditionally filled by appointment]. The others have a five-year journey ahead of them before they can return to parliament but they must begin their comeback efforts now.

While the opposition parties' programs were rejected, personal services offered by independent candidates came to the forefront. The names of some of these candidates became more famous than the parties' promises. The voters chose the election symbols such as the camel, the watch, or the lighter without paying heed to the party affiliation of each candidate. On the contrary, some candidates fared badly precisely because they had been nominated by the political parties. Meanwhile the NDP offered the unique phenomenon of opposing some of its own candidates in some constituencies.

The opposition parties ran into further trouble by opposing each other and the NDP exploited this to eliminate many candidates it did not want.

A blatant example occurred in Fariskur constituency, where the opposition left overs cooperated in bringing about the loss of Diya'-al-Din Dawud, leader of the Nasirite Party. Wafd candidate Major General Hamid al-Sa'idi, as ROSE AL-YUSUF reporter Jamal Tayi' confirms, insisted on making Dawud lose. He swore before everybody to support independent candidate Muhammad Khalil Quwaytah because Dawud had not honored his election promises to him. A large number of the votes of Kafr al-'Arab village, which amount to 9,000 votes, went to Quwaytah. Dawud was the victim of the war between the Wafd and Nasirite Party in Fariskur.

Turning to the acts of violence, the 1995 election set a new record in the number of people killed and wounded. Forty people were killed, according to the Interior Ministry, while the Egyptian Committee for Monitoring the Election says 45 were killed. As for the wounded, they were in the hundreds. In the first round, the Lower Egypt governorates topped the list in violence. Specifically, eight people were killed in Kafr al-Shaykh, two in Suhaj, two in al- Daqahliyah, and one in al-Jizah. Bloody clashes took place in al-Zarqa, Santimai, Baltim, Dikirnis, and Bashalush. Voter turnout was 60 percent in the governorates and 30 percent in Cairo. In the second round, Upper Egypt topped the list in violence. In Qina, seven people were killed, one in al-Badrashayn, three in Abu-Hammad, and four in Dikirnis. The turnout was much higher than during the first round.

An analysis of the phenomenon of violence during election reveals the following:

1. Many villages and towns are floating over a lake of weapons, Molotov cocktails, chains, hard sticks. This arsenal is no longer exclusively possessed by terrorist groups. Election thugs possess them too. Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi is supposed to give us an explanation about the routes through which these weapons are leaked to endanger the entire society.

2. The thugs had the upper hand in determining the outcome in some constituencies, as is the case with Nasirite Party candidate Hamdayn Sabbahi. As our correspondent Karim Subhi reports, the thugs of Sabbahi's rival candidate were active from the Ramsis Square [in Cairo] up to Baltim [in Nile Delta]. The thugs, armed with clubs and heavy sticks, stood before poling stations to prevent voters from casting their ballots. They even went as far as beating journalists with heavy sticks. They carried firearms and knives and prevented journalists from entering any polling station, although they had obtained a permit from the head of the judicial committee in the constituency. They even assaulted one of the judges when he tried to enter al-Hamul Police Station thinking that he was one of Sabbahi's supporters.

The third phenomenon is the police's passive neutrality in some instances. Some policemen thought that neutrality means nonintervention with or against anybody, that their role is confined to securing the polling stations from inside, which means that thugs should be left to "sort it out among themselves." However, this does not undermine the major role played by police in securing polling stations and intervening decisively in many instances to stop real blood baths that would have engulfed the whole country in endless cases of vendetta.

Have we become a bloody people or have we caught the contagious disease of the terrorist groups? This is the question which we must answer in the coming stage before we are surprised that the law of the jungle has become the rule and that victory goes to the strongest who takes the law into his own hands and does not leave it in the state's hands. As the proverb says, "prestige is half the regime's power." If so, everybody stands to lose if there is tampering with the state's prestige, which is primarily the ability of the regime to maintain a "balance" among all political forces. Unfortunately, some tried to tamper with the state's authority and prestige. It was a mistake on the part of the opposition parties to welcome and praise the statement attributed to the U.S. State Department. They used the statement to claim that the United States denounces the detention, arrests, and trial of political activists to influence the results of the election.

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It is possible for political parties and forces to quarrel and reconcile as part of the competition, but to seek a U.S. arbiter is a slip that has greatly affected the voters' choice of their candidates. This means that the question is not one of principles and stances, but mere slogans to make limited gains. The second slip was to play the card of the Muslim Brothers, which is a lost card that has cost the Labor Party everything. The Brothers have received two crushing blows that made their chances of winning parliament seats almost impossible.

The first blow came at the hands of the state, which refered the younger leaders of the Brotherhood to military courts. It broke the organization in half, made it lose balance, and paralyzed it. As is known, the group refered to trial included the most politically active Brotherhood members in the country. With the passing of court ruling against them, there was no one left in the Brotherhood but the elderly members who can hardly move and the very young generations who have not yet been admitted into the organizational structure.

The Brothers received the second blow at the hands of the terrorist groups through the horrendous Islamabad incident. The incident has destroyed what is left in the Egyptian street of the groups who use or take advantage of religion. The Egyptians, who follow their intuition, possess an instinctive sense of alarm. They did not choose a single candidate from the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, who numbered more than a hundred.

Only one terrorist incident took place in front of the commerce school in al-Mahallah constituency. Police forces were surprised to see four vans loaded with supporters of Islamist candidate Mahfuz Hilmi. The passengers hailed sharp rocks at the polling station. As our correspondent 'Isam Abu-Hiram reports, when the vehicles were searched police found 90 balls soaked in inflammatory material, 60 kg of nails, 40 Coca Cola bottles, and 70 aerosol cans loaded with explosives, and a sketch drawing of the entrance to the school, which is the biggest polling station in al-Gharbiyah Governorate. Other than this incident, the matter was confined to a withdrawal show before the television cameras and news agency reporters in a number of constituencies.

It is certain that the election will change the political and partisan life for the NDP and opposition parties. Perhaps the NDP will realize that it is simply a shelter for people searching for interests and gains. It does not possess a political ideology or a long or short program to become a real party in the full sense of the word that reflects harmonious ideas or interests. Proof of this is that 100 independent deputies, looking for gains and privileges, hastened to join the party immediately after the announcement of the election results. Had the party nominated them, half of them would have lost. Most of the NDP candidates would have won the election anyway had the party not nominated them. Would the NDP have scored the same result, 94 percent, had the president given up leadership of the party and backed another party?

The NDP faces one of two possibilities. Either it will learn the lesson and begin now to prepare for future battles so that it may not be surprised to learn that the popularity that has suddenly fallen into its lap has suddenly slipped out of its hands. Or it will believe that it is the strongest party that controls the street, thus undermining all chances of change and reform.

As for the Wafd Party, the election has proved that it cannot stand in the way of change. For we cannot rule the present with the laws of the past, the same as you cannot wear a "T-shirt" with a tarboosh on your head. Perhaps [Wafd deputy leader] Dr. Nu'man Jum'ah has lost because of the Wafd's traditional slogans. He thought he was running in a constituency dominated by the Wafd and some extremist Islamic currents. He focused in his election campaign on political dogmas with which the vast majority of Imbabah residents did not identify. As our correspondent Hamdi al-Husayni reports, Dr. Jum'ah has forgotten that Imbabah is the largest constituency of the labor classes, who deal with tangible accomplishments and not ideas.

Nu'man admitted that the elections had been impartial but could not explain how he lost after being optimistic throughout the vote count and assuring his supporters that he had decided the battle in his favor early. Perhaps he allowed himself to be lulled by his unrealistic optimism and woke up from his reverie when ballot box number 132 decided the contest in favor of his opponent Isma'il Hilal. Nu'man had relied on the Wafd Party's reputation which failed, however, to make 80 percent of the voters go to the polling stations. Only 20 percent in that constituency voted: 25,000 out of 70,000 registered voters [figures as published].

The Nasirite Party also paid a price for its hesitation and its bizarre alliances with political forces whose positions and inclinations are hostile to its own. Hamadayn al-Sabahi, for example, allied himself with the Muslim Brothers, imagining that such two contradictory teams could enter parliament together. Diya' Dawud lost as a result of a Wafd conspiracy. Additionally the party failed to produce leaders with political influence who are able to work with the masses, instead of satisfying themselves with rhetoric and breaking chairs inside closed election rally tents. Samih 'Ashur, the Nasirite Party's sole parliamentary representative, disregarded his party's erroneous calculations and conducted an

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election campaign that struck a balance between his own speeches and the language that his Upper Egypt constituents could understand. In the next few years, the Nasirite Party will face the daunting task of renewing its cells and replacing its fading old guard with new young leaders, however, the only political exercise that the new generation is good at is shouting slogans.

As for the Liberal Party, its parliamentary representation accurately reflects its public support. The party is merely a newspaper and has no activity in the street. Even Mustafa Bakri's election battle in Hulwan against Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub was not conducted in the context of the Liberal party or under its umbrella.

Perhaps the NPUG was the only party which had learned a lesson from past experience. It abandoned such slogans as: "A glass of milk for every child," and "A voter registration card with every loaf."

The party balanced its power against the other rival powers and won five parliamentary seats. This party's real problem is who will fill the vacuum left by Khalid Muhyi-al-Din who extended bridges of communication to all other political forces, succeeded in neutralizing his traditional enemies, and won the Kafr Shukr election battle with his cool-nerves policy. Our correspondent Muhammad Jamal noted that Muhyi-al-Din accepted police advice not to walk about in his constituency's streets to rob gangster-type rioters employed by his opponent of the chance to attack him until the election result was announced. Even when a strong rumor was spread that his opponent's supporters had falsified dozens of ballots, Muhyi-al-Din defused the potentially volatile situation and asked his brother Dr. 'Umar Muhyi-al-Din to handle the situation wisely. He beat his opponent by more than 30,000 votes.

The Labor Party, which fielded 120 candidates under its own banner and 100 independents representing the Islamist stream, did not win a single seat. Actually the party lost the elections before they even began because it devoted its publicity efforts and all its resources to very few candidates, namely, party leader Ibrahim Shukri, 'Adil Husayn, Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus, and Dr. Najla' al- Qalyubi, Majdi Husayn's [AL-SHA'B chief editor] wife. It neglected the other candidates, provoking grudges in their ranks.

The Labor Party tried to strum the national unity cord and fielded a Coptic candidate, Jamal As'ad, in Shubra's Technical Institute Constituency, next to Najla' al-Qalyubi. The party was trying to weave a strange Islamist-Coptic fabric. Jamal As'ad noticed that he was merely a lie used by the party and quickly withdrew his candidacy to escape a humiliating defeat.

These were the elections that were conducted with warlike tactics. In war, everyone knows who fired the first shot, but no one knows who will fire the last.

The ones who will fire this last bullet are those who reassess their chances carefully, are aware of their powers and weaknesses, and classify themselves accordingly.

No party can survive if it does not work closely with the public. No party can survive if it merely relies on the fact that it is the president's party.

Musa Urges Action To Solve Yemen-Eritrea Problem

NC1812195995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1841 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Addis Ababa, 18 Dec (MENA) — Egypt has voiced its extreme concern over the recent developments between Yemen and Eritrea in the dispute over the Hanish islands in the Red Sea.

In a statement in Addis Ababa this evening, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said sovereignty, international law, and established rights must be respected and that the problem between the two countries must be solved through negotiations.

The foreign minister emphasized that an opportunity still exists to contain the situation and halt any military operations between the two countries.

He called for speedy action to solve the problem through immediate cooperation "because the two countries are brothers, the first is a fraternal Arab country and the second is a fraternal African state." He stressed that Egypt cannot accept the use of military force in this issue.

Musa: Sudan Must Hand Over Defendants

NC1812220195 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said in Addis Ababa today that Egypt's stance on Sudan and terrorism maintains that Khartoum must implement the resolution passed by the Mechanism for Settlement of African Disputes in September. This resolution provides for handing the three defendants in Sudan to Ethiopia, in accordance with the extradition agreement signed between the two countries. In a statement on the sidelines of the meeting that opened in Addis Ababa today, he said that Sudan must also clarify its stance on regional and international terrorism, noting that this is not Egypt's stance alone but that of Ethiopia and most of the member states. He denied reports that there is an Algerian mediation effort between Sudan and Egypt.

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Libya

Eritrean 'Aggression' Against Yemen Condemned

LD1812152495 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1330 GMT 18 Dec 95

[Statement by the General People's Committee for Unity]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Secretariat of the General People's Committee for Unity is following with concern the regrettable events which stemmed from the attack by the Eritrean forces against the islands of Greater Hanish, Lesser Hanish, and Zuqar, which are under Yemeni sovereignty. These islands were handed over to Yemen at the end of the British occupation. Yemen extended its sovereignty over them and the islands became an integrated part of it.

As it emphasizes the correctness of the Yemeni sovereignty over these islands, the Secretariat of the General People's Committee for Unity denounces the Eritrean military aggression against fraternal Yemen, expresses its regrets over this aggression, and calls on both sides to deal with the issue of maritime borders between them through dialogue and peaceful means on the basis of the historic relations between the two peoples. This is in order to avoid any external interference aimed at harming these relations and at destabilizing the security and safety of the Arab countries around the Red Sea, particularly from Israel and the United States, whose fleet is stationed in the Red Sea because of its strategic importance for the American policies of subjugating the Arab nation and the African Horn to its hegemony and influence.

Morocco

Media Confirm House Arrest of Yassine Lifted

LD1812134095 Rabat MAP in English 1254 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Dec 18 (MAP) — Moroccan authorities decision to lift the five year house arrest measure against the leader of the banned Moroccan Muslim fundamentalist organization "al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan" (Justice and Charity), Shaykh Abdessalam Yassine, has been officially notified to the 67 year old man, Moroccan opposition media reported Monday.

Shaykh Yassine is no longer under house arrest, the same sources affirmed, adding that the official announcement was made during a meeting, over the weekend, between a local authorities delegation led by the governor of Rabat-Sale and members of this organization.

Conflicting reports, Friday and Saturday, said the banned organization leader was still under a house arrest even though he was allowed to receive visitors and perform the Friday prayer at a nearby mosque.

Moroccan opposition newspapers had welcomed the measure taken by authorities, describing it as "a good news" for all human rights organizations and a step forward in consolidating the respect for the rule of law. The 67-year old Muslim fundamentalist leader who preaches a moderate Islam is to hold Monday evening a news conference at his home. Yassine, who wrote several books on Islam, had served several prison sentences in the past.

Authorities Tighten Security on Yassine

LD1812203795 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just learned that today the Moroccan authorities have stepped up the measures of surveillance and security surrounding Shaykh Abdessalam Yassine, the main Islamist opposition leader of the country, to prevent him from meeting supporters while he is under house arrest, his son reported.

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Saddam Chairs Cabinet Session on Economic Policy

JN1712183295 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, has said that the economic policy endorsed by the leadership for the phase of crossing, and subsequent phases, can be summarized in three interrelated and equal dimensions. These are:

1. Reducing costs and expenditure.
2. Increasing production and services.
3. Developing the quality of production and services.

He added: This phase also requires a total reconsideration of the policies and methods of action in all production and services sectors and ensuring that the laws and regulations meet their requirements. This came in an important speech by his excellency the leader president, may God preserve him, while chairing the cabinet's 43d session.

Addressing the cabinet members, his excellency said: The tasks of the administrative leaderships now should concentrate on devising policies, alternatives, methods of action, and instructions to achieve this economic policy, with its three dimensions, as well as following up and assessing implementation, and not being content with issuing orders and instructions, but rather finding clear methods of action through daily work, field visits, and dialogue with workers, and also enlightening them about the mistakes or deviation from the three dimensions of this policy, and rectifying any mistake and deviation immediately.

His excellency added: When, for example, we talk about reducing costs and expenditures, we should not be content with reducing them only when debating and endorsing the budget. We should work out methods of action to curb any increase that may occur during the year. Moreover, we should increase the struggle to reduce the costs and expenditures even after they, along with their various elements and chapters, have been endorsed. We should also make sure that this is the real situation on the ground.

His excellency continued: While working out programs to maximally invest the material and human resources, from a practical viewpoint we should first seek out all corners concealing squandering, misuse, and weakness in administering the available materials and tools, as well as weakness in distributing and dividing work and skills, in training, and in the fixed and variable administrative expenses.

He said: Each administrative leader and his subordinates should have the desire and capability not only to pinpoint an imbalance but also to guide and manipulate these resources, whether material or human, as well as to find alternative methods of action which serve this policy.

His excellency, may God protect him, also said: The evil aggressors imagined that through this blockade they could paralyze the will of the Iraqis. However, they forgot that Iraq, with its two great rivers, and with the capabilities and skills of its people, can—if the people employ good administration and management—double the local production, and continue development and construction.

The cabinet discussed the topics on its agenda, including the draft law on production incentives. In view of the discussions, it was decided that the industrial and economic committees should reconsider this draft law. The cabinet also discussed a number of proposals and measures, and made the appropriate decisions.

Al-Sahhaf Returns From OIC Meeting in Guinea

JN1612101495 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0940 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 16 Dec (INA)—Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf returned to Baghdad yesterday evening after heading the Iraqi delegation to meetings of the 23d conference of the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] foreign ministers, held in Conakry, capital of Guinea, on 9-12 December.

The foreign minister held meetings with several counterparts on the sidelines of the conference.

During these meetings, the minister explained recent developments in the efforts to revoke the Iraq sanctions. Several delegations expressed a sympathetic attitude toward Iraq.

Husayn Kamil 'Source': Statement 'Draft' for Talks

MM1812142395 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by 'Imad al-Furayh: "Sources Close to Husayn Kamil Consider Statement 'Preliminary Draft'; Announcement of Supreme Council for Salvation of Iraq Postponed Pending Discussion of His Political Program"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — A source close to General Husayn Kamil, former Iraqi industry minister and director of the Military Industrialization Organization, has said that the former Iraqi official's next

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step is to form "the Supreme Council for the Salvation of Iraq" after Iraqi opposition forces and figures have discussed the political program he announced two days ago, whose text was published exclusively by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT the day before yesterday.

The source, who was speaking to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, pointed out that the statement, which included the proposed council's working plan to change the Iraqi regime, is a "preliminary draft" to introduce the council's program to the Iraqi people, the Arabs, and the world. The source said that copies of the statement have been distributed to the various Iraqi opposition political forces and figures for them to study and to decide on a position regarding action within the council framework. The source added that "numerous Iraqi political and cultural figures" participated in writing the statement.

Asked about the next step, the source said that Gen. Kamil is waiting for the views and observations of the Iraqi opposition forces "in order to complete the final version (of the council's program)." The source pointed out that "the council's door is open to all Iraqi citizens in order to achieve the aim of changing the current regime and establishing a pluralist, parliamentary, democratic system."

Asked whether Gen. Kamil or any of the council's officials will participate in an Iraq opposition meeting reportedly to be held in the Jordanian capital, Amman, next month, the source said: "We will participate in that meeting if it is held here and if we are invited to it, as long as it is in the interests of the Iraqi people's cause."

Iraqi observers expect Gen. Kamil to head the Supreme Council for the Salvation of Iraq. The former Iraqi official met in Amman with a number of Iraqi oppositionists on the eve of the announcement of his political program.

Central Bank Governor Denies Plans To Issue New Note

JN1912101795 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY has asked Central Bank Governor Dr. 'Isam al-Mullah Huwaysh whether there is any truth in the rumors that the bank will soon issue a new bill that might be called the golden dinar, the steadfastness currency, or any other name. The Central Bank governor answered: This rumor is unfounded and untrue. There are no economic, financial, or monetary justifications for this rumor.

Baghdad Proposes Alternative to Resolution 986

NC1912111795 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 14 Dec 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—UN sources have disclosed to AL-SAFIR that Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has proposed to UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali an alternative to Security Council Resolution 986 that calls for an oil-for-foodstuffs barter.

The sources reported that the new Iraqi proposal calls on the United States and other Western countries to release the Iraqi assets currently frozen in Western banks in return for a promise from Baghdad to use these funds to purchase food and medicine from the countries where the assets are being kept; the funds are under the supervision of parties named by those countries. The foodstuffs and medicine would then be shipped directly to Iraq without passing through a third party's port.

The sources said that immediately upon his arrival in New York last Tuesday [12 December] 'Aziz began to promote this proposal and had contacts with the representatives of the concerned countries at the United Nations. The sources ruled out any 'Aziz meeting with any senior U.S. officials, however.

The sources revealed that the United Nations and several Western capitals are now convinced that the Iraqi authorities will not accept Resolution 986 because the Iraqi people's tragedy has recently turned into a card that the regime uses to arouse sympathy in numerous international circles and make them more amenable to the lifting of the sanctions on Iraq. This is particularly true in view of a report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization that about 500,000 Iraqi children have died since 1991 as a result of food and medicine shortages.

The UN sources said that the U.S. Administration might accept this proposal or encourage other countries to do so in hopes of depriving the Iraqi regime of the sympathy card and easing the pressure from businessmen and firms to lift the sanctions so that they can invest in Iraq's reconstruction, a process that will reportedly cost dozens of billions of dollars.

At the same time, the U.S. Administration is afraid that approval of the proposed Iraqi resolution might encourage those countries and international banks that have secret deposits of Iraqi funds to begin conducting semi-public transactions with this money, using much bigger sums than the ones currently undertaken. The U.S. Administration believes this would give the Iraqi regime a greater opportunity to reorganize its affairs at home and abroad and ease the crunch of the economic sanctions.

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However, a senior Iraqi opposition source with close contacts with the U.S. Administration told AL-SAFIR that the U.S. Administration is not likely to accept the Iraqi proposal because the current major dispute between the two sides is the Iraqi regime's refusal to comply with Resolution 986.

The source added that there are two aspects of this problem:

1. Baghdad's refusal to implement this resolution is a challenge to the United Nations. Therefore disregarding, changing, or neglecting this resolution would represent a UN capitulation to Baghdad's challenges, and this might later get involved in challenges of a different type.

2. The talk that the undeclared aim of the international sanctions is to bring down the whole regime is not accurate when it comes to the U.S. Administration. This administration does not want to bring down the regime and its head but hopes to deal with a weak ruler and country. It fears that Baghdad's noncompliance with Resolution 986 will exacerbate the living and health conditions in a way that undermines the security situation. In this case, Washington will be forced to deal with regional parties that have strong influence inside the Iraqi opposition circles, something which Washington is doing all it can to avoid.

The opposition source went on to say that the U.S. Administration has given Jordan's King Husayn the green light to contact some Iraqi opposition parties inside and outside Iraq in hopes that it can pressure Baghdad to accept Resolution 986 by hinting at programs to replace the whole regime.

Meanwhile, Iraqi opposition sources have revealed that the new Iraqi "Homeland Party" whose establishment was recently announced in Amman is a cover for opposition Iraqi groups under the leadership of Husayn Jamil al-Majid. The sources added that the Iraqi opposition refuses to deal with the new party and holds most of its leaders responsible for crimes committed against the people and opposition in Iraq.

On the other hand, the sources said that the formation of the party in Jordan does not mean that the Jordanian authorities intend to invite its leaders to participate in the opposition conference slated to be held in Amman early next year. The sources added that the main signal that Jordan's King Husayn wants to send to Iraqi officials by sheltering Husayn Kamil and his supporters is his willingness to grant any of these officials a "safe haven" should they leave Iraq.

The sources noted that the "real value" of Husayn Kamil and others who fled from Iraq lies in the information they possess, so their value diminishes once they reveal this information because they do not represent anybody inside Iraq other than those represented by the head of the regime himself.

However, the opposition sources stressed that despite the Unified Iraqi National Congress' [UINC] declared position vis-a-vis Husayn Kamil and even though his name was among 20 people that the UNIC is demanding be tried as war criminals, some parties within the UNIC are holding contacts with Husayn Kamil and his group and strengthening their ties with him. [passage omitted]

Free Zone for Mass Destruction Weapons Urged

JN1812163795 Baghdad INA in English 1430 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Dec 18, INA—An Iraqi newspaper welcomed an initiative by the Arab League to discuss a draft agreement to rid the Middle East area of weapons of mass destruction.

AL-THAWRAH said in an article on Monday that this initiative has a special importance as it coincides with Iraq's determination to fulfill its commitments towards international resolutions, particularly 687 which represents a step on the way of establishing a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and means of launching them.

AL-THAWRAH said the committee formed by the Arab League to discuss the agreement should carefully consider the huge arsenal of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons that has been acquired by the Zionist entity. The destructive power of this arsenal is a threat to the region's security.

The paper called for defining a mechanism that would guarantee the implementation of an agreement that would rid the region of weapons of mass destruction.

The agreement should not only force the Zionist entity to disclose its arsenal of such weapons but also to destroy them and to stop current research and studies on how to increase the size of the arsenal, said AL-THAWRAH.

It added that the agreement should also cover the Iranian regime which, reports say, is seeking to boost its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction.

It is time that all the countries of the region be required to follow Iraq's example and disclose their arsenal of these internationally banned weapons.

Also the UN should play its role in dismantling weapons of mass destruction and imposing a direct control on the manufacture of such weapons in the future as it did with Iraq.

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Paper Views Pentagon Search Team Mission

JN1512160295 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 15 Dec 95 pp 1, 20

[Report by Muhammad Dalbah in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A U.S. Pentagon search team is expected in the Jordanian capital, Amman, today. The team is working with an International Red Cross team in western Iraq to search for the remains of a U.S. pilot, Michael Speicher, whose aircraft was downed by Iraqi artillery during a raid against Iraq at dawn on 17 January 1991.

Officials at the U.S. Defense Department, the Pentagon, said the team has made some progress in the mission, which is being carried out with the full knowledge of the Iraqi authorities. However, they are still waiting to ascertain whether or not the team's mission is a success.

Speicher was the first pilot to be shot down over Iraq in the war which the United States launched against Iraq almost five years ago to force it to withdraw from Kuwait.

In two separate reports, THE NEW YORK TIMES and THE BOSTON GLOBE yesterday said the Pentagon team's mission, which is approved by Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, is a small but very significant step in Iraq's attempt to end the isolation and embargo imposed against it. [passage omitted]

Al-Sahhaf, Canadian Official Discuss Sanctions

JN1812203995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1955 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Dec (INA)—Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf met here today with Canadian Parliament member Jack Bahadoria [name as transliterated].

Al-Sahhaf said during the meeting that Iraq has met its obligations stated in the Security Council's resolutions. He asserted that wicked political motives that have nothing to do with these resolutions are behind maintaining the unjust blockade against Iraq and causing much suffering to its people.

For his part, Bahadoria said the blockade imposed on Iraq violates the UN Charter and the principles of justice and called for lifting it.

He also asserted that he, as well as other Canadian parliamentarians, are determined to lift that blockade from Iraq's people.

Saudi Prisoner Released, Returned Home

JN1712145395 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] In coordination with the mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the competent Iraqi authorities returned a Saudi national to his country today. A prison sentence was issued against the Saudi national for illegally entering Iraqi territory. He was released in accordance with a Republican decree pardoning Arab prisoners from the remainder of their prison terms.

Oil Official Cited on Cooperation With Jordan

JN1812111995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1040 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Dec (INA) — Press reports here today said a delegation from the Jordanian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Wealth will visit Iraq this month to follow up on the implementation of the bilateral oil cooperation agreement and promote cooperation between the two countries.

AL-JUMHURIYAH cited Fa'iz 'Abdallah al-Shahin, under secretary at the Iraqi Oil Ministry, as saying supplying Jordan with crude oil has been continuing for years. Iraq is the main supplier of Jordanian oil needs.

Al-Shahin said Iraq continues to provide Jordan with crude oil in accordance with programs designed for this purpose at an average of 60-70,000 barrels per day. This is in addition to limited quantities of liquid gas, gas oil, and other byproducts. Jordanian demand for crude oil is expected to rise to meet the increase in local consumption.

On what has been implemented of the agreement during the previous and upcoming visits of the Jordanian delegation, the Oil Ministry under secretary said Iraq had given its approval in principle to establish a refinery in al-'Aqabah. In addition, a pipeline will be extended from the T1 terminal to the al-Zarqa' refinery to supply Jordan with crude oil, eliminating the need for trucking.

Civil Defense Defuses Bombs in Ninawa Governorate

JN1812180895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1440 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mosul, 18 Dec (INA)—The Civil Defense Department in Ninawa Governorate defused 14 U.S.-made spherical bombs, which U.S. planes dropped over Ba'wizah village farms in Ninawa Governorate during the 30-state aggression on Iraq.

The director of the Civil Defense Department in the governorate urged farmers to inform of any bombs without tampering with them.

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Paper: Saddam's Son Involved in Smuggling Case

JN1812192695 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic 20 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] New secrets about the Iraqi companies operating in Jordan began to emerge following the security agencies' confiscation of control and guidance equipment, which were destined for Iraq.

Iraqi opposition sources disclosed that this shipment was not the first of its kind, nor will it be the last. The companies that are working for the Iraqi president are active in several countries and are constantly expanding their networks.

In addition to the companies operating in Jordan and their regional offices in Europe, Latin America, and Asia, a network of companies began to expand their activities in the "independent" Soviet republics, which provide a main source for the equipment that can be used in weapons manufacturing.

AL-HADATH sources stressed that such equipment entered Romania in August and September from Lithuania en route to southeast Asia. They were sent to a branch of a commercial company registered in Jordan and owned by two persons — a Romanian and an Arab. AL-HADATH sources said that an Iraqi merchant, 'Udayy 'Ajam, who owns a number of companies in Jordan, had planned that deal with the support of 'Udayy Saddam Husayn.

'Ajam has commercial relations and interests with several companies and individuals in Jordan. Large sums of money were transferred to Jordanian banks in his name following Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil's escape from Iraq and his revelations on the method in which such equipment was purchased. 'Ajam deals with a Jordanian broker named Wi'am Abu-Gharbiyah, who fled Jordan following the exposure of the equipment case. 'Udayy 'Ajam also left for Baghdad.

In this regard, arrivals from Iraq revealed that large military trucks moved technical equipment and large containers from 'Aba' Center for Agricultural Research to an unidentified location following the discovery of cancer cases among the people and livestock in the area.

It is apparent that Baghdad started to take precautionary measures following the seizure of the equipment in Amman airport. The Iraqi Trade Ministry told the merchants who deal with the Jordanian market to stop their imports from Jordan and transfer to Turkey. Baghdad is exerting intensive efforts to turn the Kurdish town of Fa'idah on the road between Mosul and Zakho into a free zone. Baghdad was encouraged to take this step by the absence of international supervision on the road between Iraq and Turkey and the Turks' readiness to supply the Iraqi Government with various goods and commodities, both those which are banned and permitted.

One Chief Editor Jailed; Another Freed

JN1812153995 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 18 Dec 95 p 19

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman's Prosecutor General Jamal al-Zu'bi decided to detain Jihad al-Mawmani, chief editor of the weekly SHIHAN, for 15 days at al-Juwaydah Rehabilitation Center for publishing an article that harms the reputation, dignity, and personal freedom of others in violation of Article 40 of the Press and Publications Law.

He was also charged with failure to inform the general prosecutor about a crime in violation of Article 26 of the Penal Procedures Law. He was also accused of slander through the publication, in violation of Article 189 of the Penal Code.

SHIHAN published a report saying that narcotic pills are taken at beauty parlors and legal violations are committed in them. This report harmed the reputation of a complainer, and the newspaper did not inform the general prosecutor about the occurrence of such crimes in some beauty parlors as published in the report.

AL-DUSTUR learned that the owner of a beauty parlor in western Amman filed a complaint against the newspaper and its chief editor for publishing her picture in the report, which was something, as she said, that harmed her reputation and dignity.

The prosecutor general refused to release the chief editor of SHIHAN on bail, but the court decided to free him on bail after his lawyer appealed the decision of the general prosecutor.

Meanwhile, Amman court of first instance decided yesterday to free the chief editor of SAWT AL-MAR'AH, who has been detained since last Wednesday for the crime of slandering Iraqi president Saddam Husayn.

Newspapers Cautioned Over Shubaylat Inquiry

JN1912114095 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Dec 95 pp 1, 7

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The Press and Publications Department on Monday cautioned newspapers that it was illegal to publish the proceedings of the investigation of the case that the general prosecutor has raised against Jordan Engineers Association President Layth Shubaylat.

Muhammad Amin, director of the department, sent a letter to the Jordan Times and other publications saying

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that they should refrain from publishing the proceedings of the investigation in accordance with Article 42 of the Press and Publications Law, which, he said, "bans the publication of courts proceedings and investigations before the issuance of a final verdict and obtaining permission from court."

Mr. Amin said he acted upon the request of the general prosecutor at the State Security Court where Mr. Shubaylat is expected to be tried on charges of sedition and slandering His Majesty King Husayn.

Nothing in the Press and Publications Law, however, bans the publication of information on cases that are being tried at court and does not refer to investigations being carried out by the prosecutor general.

Article 42 of the Press and Publications Law, which Mr. Amin quoted as legal basis for his request, says: "It is prohibited to publish the minutes of cases that are being tried at courts before the issuance of the final verdict and unless the court permits that."

Veteran lawyer and a former president of the Judiciary Committee at the Lower House of Parliament Husayn Mujalli confirmed that the reference in the law is to "the minues" of the trial and not to information on court cases that could be obtained from various sources, such as lawyers.

Mr. Mujalli noted that the law bans the publication of the minutes of cases that are being examined by court but does not refer to the minutes of the investigation by the prosecutor general because "these minutes should be secret anyway" and nobody should have access to them before the investigation is completed.

Mr. Mujalli said it is legal for newspapers to publish information on cases that are being examined by courts and investigated by the prosecutor general as long as this information is not the minutes of the trial or the investigation.

Newspapers, he said, will be fulfilling their duties towards the citizens' right to information by publishing information on such cases.

Mr. Shubaylat was detained on Dec. 9 but no charges against him have been filed yet. The prosecutor general has refused to grant bail to Mr. Shubaylat, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1993 after being found guilty of charges of sedition. Mr. Shubaylat, whose current case is receiving wide coverage in the tabloid press, was released under a general amnesty issued by King Husayn

Editorial Criticizes Pope's Remarks on Jerusalem

JN1912112295 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Duality on Delicate Scale"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pope John Paul II inched closer than ever to recognising Israeli grip on Jerusalem when he was quoted as telling the widow of the late Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhaq Rabin last week that the Vatican viewed Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state. True the Pope also said that the Holy City has a dual character, one being the capital of Israel and the other as the capital of the three monotheistic faiths. Yet on closer look this acceptance of the dual importance of Jerusalem lacks balance. Recognising the religious significance of the city to Muslims and Christians is not comparable to accepting it as the political capital of the state of Israel.

For starters, the formulation excludes Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian people at a time when there is a mounting chorus of international opinion, including Israeli, which calls for East Jerusalem to be the capital of a Palestinian state. Secondly, the determination of the future status of Jerusalem was deliberately postponed by the concerned parties until the very end of the peace process due to its complexity and the conflicting claims to it. This is not to mention that the entire issue is so emotionally charged that not even or especially, the Pope should talk about it now.

Equally relevant is the proposition that there are in fact two Jerusalems, one in the West and the other in the East. There are many ingenious ways to reconcile the different claims to the city that have yet to be fully explored. Pronouncements on Jerusalem as of now, particularly by the Holy See, that may aim to seal its future one way or another could be prejudicial to the future negotiations on its status. We may take comfort from the fact that the Vatican has effectively issued a disclaimer of what Mrs. Rabin said. But unless the Pope actually says otherwise we would continue to believe that there has been a shift in the Vatican's official stand on Jerusalem. Until the Palestinians and Israelis begin the search for a solution that is fair to all sides, politically and religiously, neither the people nor anybody else should prejudice the status and future of Jerusalem.

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Loan, Debt Rescheduling Accords Signed With Japan

JN1712200295 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jordan and Japan have signed an agreement on an $80-million soft loan from the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan. This loan is extended in the co-financing operation with the World Bank's economic reform and development loan, which aims at supporting improved measures for the trade and investment environment in the Kingdom. A memoranda to this effect was exchanged between the minister of planning and the Japanese ambassador to Jordan. Meanwhile, Jordan and Japan signed a memorandum to reschedule Jordanian debts to the Japanese Government amounting a $115 million dollars. The memorandum was signed by the minister of finance and the Japanese ambassador.

After the signing ceremony the Japanese ambassador [not further identified] [spoke with] Radio Jordan's Husayn Musa:

[Begin Japanese ambassador's recording] Well, this agreement is to reschedule Jordan's debt which amounts $115 million approximately to be repaid in 10 years to come rather than right now in the three years period. So, it is another way of supporting Jordan in its economic recovery and further development. And also a support of his majesty's strong initiative for the peace process. So, it is a part of very important overall support from Japan to the people and the government of Jordan. [end recording]

Cabinet Approves Law Allowing Foreign Investments

JN1712112595 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir chaired a cabinet meeting yesterday evening during which the cabinet approved the regulations pertaining to encouragement of investment by non-Jordanians. These regulations are based on the 1995 Encouragement of Investment Law.

The regulations allow any non-Jordanian investor to own all or part of a project or economic activity in the kingdom, provided that he transfers to the country the capital, the value of his share, or the amount of his contribution to the project into convertible foreign currency before the conveyance procedures can be finalized.

Minister Briefs Parliament on New Economic Plan

JN1712125595 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 17 Dec 95 p 6

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister of finance told the Parliament that Jordan agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a new programme of economic adjustment covering three-years, 1996-1998, which are the remaining three years under the present seven-year programme, 1992-1998.

Describing the programme as new is an overstatement. After four years of year-to-year targets and measures, the IMF is now ready to approve a three-year package of reforms and objectives, the performance of which will be reviewed on yearly basis.

The new arrangement worked out with the IMF will satisfy a condition attached to the latest Japanese soft loan extended to Jordan. The loan can be withdrawn only when Jordan has a new adjustment programme approved by the IMF. With this three-year programme, Japan can rest assured that its financial help will not be used to delay the ongoing reform but to enhance it.

A major benefit which will accure to Jordan under the new programme is that the Paris Club will no longer be called upon to reschedule installments falling due every year or every 18 months as was the case. It will agree to reschedule in advance all the instalments falling due over the coming three years, thus showing its confidence that Jordan's commitment to carry on with reforms will be honoured.

The new programme will call for a rather high rate of economic growth, up to 6.5 per cent per annum instead of the 4.5 per cent envisaged by the original programme drawn around the end of 1991.

This ambitious objective indicates that most of the required structural adjustment measures have already been implemented. Jordan crossed the point of no-return regarding the liberalisation of its economy and its market orientation. Time is now ripe to shift the emphasis from reforms to growth, in order to expand the economy by over 20 per cent in three years, before the extensive repayment of debts will start to take place in 1999 and beyond.

Jordan may experience during the coming three years a very high growth rate due to two reasons. First, the economy got rid of many distortions, restrictions and obstacles and is ready to take off. Second, Jordan is expected to receive sizeable transfers of capital in the form of grants, soft loans and private investments, which will make the target of such a high growth possible.

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The silent features of the new programme will be the commercialisation of some public sector corporations and the privatisation of others, pricing government services such as water and electricity in a way to recover economic costs, and the adjustments needed by industry and agriculture to survive the impending fierce competition that comes with opening up to the global market.

Jordan will by no means be compelled to continue working with the IMF in formulating adjustment programes. Most likely, Jordan will "graduate" by the end of 1998. The process of rescheduling will be terminated. All instalments falling due after that date will be either related to new loans signed after the cutt-off date of January 1, 1989 and consequently not eligible for rescheduling, or instalments which were previously rescheduled in 1989 and thereafter, falling due as of 1999 and beyond, which are also not subject to rescheduling.

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Syrian Foreign Minister Arrives, Meets al-Hirawi

NC1912111095 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 19 Dec 95

[Report by Yazbik Wahbi at the Presidential Palace in B'abda]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi has been meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' since 1205 [1005 GMT]. Present at the meeting are Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri and Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz. The Syrian minister is carrying to President Ilyas al-Hirawi a message from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad dealing with the new developments in the peace process and the proposals that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher carried to Syria during his latest visit.

Minister al-Shar' arrived at the Syrian-Lebanese border checkpoint of Judaydat Yabus at 1100 today. He announced that he is carrying a message from President al-Asad to his brother President Ilyas al-Hirawi.

Asked how serious the negotiations are, he replied: As long as Israel is sincere, we will be so too.

Israeli Forces Carry Out Activities in South

Soldier Wounded

TA1812152995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier was slightly wounded in south Lebanon and was evacuated for medical treatment. At noon today, terrorists opened mortar fire at an IDF position in al-Dabshah in the eastern sector of the security zone. The IDF soldier was hit by the fire and slightly injured.

Sheli Barracks

NC1812182095 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1740 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An Israeli soldier has been wounded in a resistance attack in south Lebanon. According to an Israeli military spokesman, the wounded soldier was taken to a hospital in northern Israel for treatment.

This afternoon, the resistance attacked the 'Ali al-Tahir and al-Dabshah positions. Afterward, the Israeli forces shelled the army's derelict barracks in al-Nabatiyah. The shelling was accompanied by 12.7-mm machine-gun fire originating from the 'Ali al-Tahir Hill. Shells also landed in al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa and Kafr Tibnit.

Elsewhere, Israeli aircraft conducted low-level flights over al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah.

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Deputy Prime Minister Views Economic Progress

MM1912112095 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Dec 95 p 13

[Interview with Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, by Nidal Ma'ruf; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ma'ruf] It has always been said that Syria is taking very slow steps toward freeing the economy. Are there any obstacles in your path?

[Yasin] I would not describe them as slow steps, but rather as balanced. The objective is to achieve the desired economic goals at the minimum costs, in other words to achieve the economic goals with the least unwanted negative side effects, be they economic or social. We in Syria believe that this approach has proved its usefulness in achieving many goals for the Syrian economy with the minimum losses on the social and economic levels. Comprehensive social and economic development was being achieved in ever increasing patterns without any social side effects such as those seen in other societies which have adopted a hasty approach in the economic development process.

[Ma'ruf] Then in your view, this balance would not be linked to the peace process in the region?

[Yasin] Our approach in economic and social development has been balanced since the beginning, and we have based our economic policy on this framework. It is constantly being modernized, in keeping with the phases of economic and social development through which the Syrian economy is passing and the continuing regional and international developments.

[Ma'ruf] In the light of the Barcelona conference and the European states' opening up to Syria, how can you face up to the Arab economic block, such as the Amman economic conference, and does Syria have any proposals similar to the Arab and international proposal?

[Yasin] In our economic policy, we were, and still are, trying to achieve two main objectives. The first is Arab economic coordination, cooperation, and integration. The second is to establish economic relations with friendly countries based on mutual benefits and common interests. We shall continue to try to establish this type of relations, whether with Arab or European groups, in view of mutual benefits, common interests, and the fact that Syria has a rich economy and resources. In addition to the natural and manufactured economic resources, there are human resources. The human element in Syria is known for its potential, abilities, serious-mindedness, and the ability to compete at all levels. Syrian products have been available on European markets since the fifties and were competing against all the products available at the time.

[Ma'ruf] There are usually challenges facing any country's development process. Which are the ones facing Syria, and how do you find the ideal solution for them?

[Yasin] Syria has many economic idiosyncrasies. The Syrian economy is mainly a multifaceted agro-industrial economy, and yet it is sensitive to developments on a regional and Arab scale. Secondly, it is a fact that Syria's population growth rate is relatively high compared to other developed and advanced states.

[Ma'ruf] There has recently been a great deal of criticism of the public sector. Will this push you to privatize?

[Yasin] Economic units, whether in the public, private, or joint sector must be managed according to economic principles, try to achieve so-called economic sufficiency, that is, production at the minimum costs, improve specifications, and hence achieve a profit from production. This is now required from economic units in Syria whether they are owned by the public, private, or joint sector. This is what we did over the past years by liberating the economic units of the public sector and asking all units to perform their tasks in line with economic principles, regardless of ownership, and this is what is being implemented in the other sectors. Privatization in Syria does not mean at all the sale of the public sector's economic units to the private sector, but instead that all economic units must work according to principles and compete with each other according to the economic principles in Syria; therefore, this meant that we had to open the doors of economic activities to all three sectors, and this is what we did over the last years.

[Ma'ruf] How do you assess Arab cooperation within the context of the Syrian economic opening?

[Yasin] First, as far as we in Syria are concerned, economic coordination and cooperation was and still is needed because we believe that Arab economic integration is in the interest of all Arab countries. Secondly, the prerequisites for Arab economic cooperation, coordination, and integration are more readily available than in any other group of countries. Thirdly, the present circumstances and developments on the international scale point to coordination and cooperation between states.

[Ma'ruf] How did Syria tackle the inflation problem, and how is the situation within the economic sectors?

[Yasin] The increase in productivity cured several economic problems, including inflation. In addition, other measures adopted through financial policies, helped to

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lower the rate of inflation in Syria to the minimum existing in other developed states. We are now focusing on the sectors' role through an increase in agricultural production and, concurrently, horizontal and vertical expansion. During the past years, the development plan focused on this field resulting in an increase in the production of the main crops such as wheat, barley, lentils, chick-peas, and other familiar crops in Syria like cotton, vegetables, and fruit.

[Ma'ruf] Predictions say that, over the coming years, Syria will see a huge increase in population, which will swallow up most of its revenue. How will you face this situation?

[Yasin] Economic principles dictate that the only way to face such issues and others is to work toward increasing the national product and to increase productivity, since by increasing it, it is possible to provide the necessary food and clothes for the increasing population, as it is possible to meet the increasing needs and wishes of the population before the increase, in order to provide them with a better standard of living. There are two elements: the population increase necessitating the provision of extra goods and services, and an improvement of the standard of living, which is required by all inhabitants in every country.

The other requirement is to make efforts to utilize the natural resources in Syria. The investments needed for prospecting for natural resources and mineral, oil, and gas wealth have been allocated. In this field we have had some positive achievements, and a high increase in oil production over the last years. In addition, we have discovered several gas reserves, of which some have been put to use and others kept in reserve. Also, with regard to the other natural resources, efforts have been and still are being made in the industrial, tourist, commercial, and service sectors.

[Ma'ruf] Which sectors have seen important developments over the last few years?

[Yasin] The agricultural sector of course saw a great development and has met the population's needs through increased production. In this, we have achieved self-sufficiency, and an export surplus of many agricultural products, including the major crops. Wheat production has exceeded 3.5 million tonnes, barley 2.5 million tonnes per year, chick-peas and lentils have doubled, and cotton production has reached 550,000-600,000 tonnes a year. There have been some real increases in industrial production as well as diversification and improvement in product specifications. Over the past three years Syria has also become an oil exporting country, having previously been an importer.

Diplomat on 'Land for Peace' Formula, Withdrawal

LD1912140495 Rabat MAP in English 1323 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Dec. 19 (MAP) Syrian Ambassador to Morocco, Ali Hassan, renewed Monday his country's attachment to the "Land for Peace" formula and stressed that the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights is a prerequisite of peace in the Middle East.

The Syrian diplomat, who was interviewed by the Moroccan cable TV Channel "2M", welcomed the statement made by Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, voicing his readiness to order the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Golan Heights shortly. Ali Hassan, however, said he was skeptical as to the implementation of this statement.

Israel still plans to leave behind Israeli settlers in the golan after its withdrawal, and seeks to carry out the withdrawal over many years, the diplomat said, adding that Syria rejects such a position.

The Syrian ambassador denied any secret contacts between Israel and Syria.

Paper: Washington Talks 'Opportunity' for Peace

JN1912095295 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 19 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial under the headline "The Washington Negotiations," TISHRIN stresses that the resumption of the negotiations in Washington presents a historic opportunity to arrive at a fair settlement that lays down the firm and solid foundations of a real peace that can withstand all challenges and can be accepted by future generations. The paper says that Damascus' response to the proposal to resume the negotiations reflects Syria's desire to establish a just, comprehensive peace and once again proves its eagerness to help the peace process arrive at its aspired objectives.

TISHRIN continues: The aspired peace must uproot the factors of tension and wars in the region, represented by the occupation, coercion, and exercise of aggression and expansion. This is a natural thing, because there can be no peace while the Golan and southern Lebanon are still under occupation. It is impossible to turn a new leaf in the region under the continued tendency for aggression, expansion, and hegemony. The paper notes that a real and just peace is the only formula that provides equitable security for all parties, removes the causes of tension and violence, and paves the way for turning a new leaf in the history of the region.

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Concluding, TISHRIN says: Syria repeatedly declared that it is looking forward to peace, and that it is ready to make peace. What is required now is to translate the recent positive signals in the Israeli positions into specific actions that create the appropriate circumstances for arriving at a comprehensive vision of a peace agreement that restores rights to their lawful owners and uproots the factors of injustice, aggression, and tension.

Under the headline "A New Opportunity for the Peace Process," AL- BA'TH says: The resumption of talks on the Syrian track in Washington on 27 December presents a new and favorable opportunity that must be exploited with full seriousness and eagerness to extricate the Middle East peace process from its current impasse and put it back on track to achieve its aspired objective, which is just and comprehensive peace based on the UN resolutions.

AL-BA'TH continues: The recent developments in the peace process, especially Israel's acknowledgement that peace is not possible without Syria and that withdrawal from the occupied territories is inevitable, prove the soundness and credibility of the Syrian position in the peace process.

Concluding its editorial, AL-BA'TH says that in its dealing with the peace process, Damascus proceeds from a host of principles, led by adherence to the UN resolutions and the land-for-peace principle. Syria firmly rejected any departure from the principles and concepts that defined the framework of the peace negotiations. All maneuvers and pressures applied against Syria, most serious of which were the self-rule and Wadi al-'Arabah agreements, failed to weaken Syria's position or force it to give up its convictions and principles. Rather, the pressures have only increased its determination to adhere to its principled stands and to insist on just and comprehensive peace.

In one of its articles, AL-THAWRAH says that the Peres government is fully aware that Syria's adherence to a genuine peace that does not harm its sovereignty and dignity is quite clear. Syria cannot give up its fair and legitimate demand for full sovereignty over the Golan. It has become a well-known fact that the full restoration of the Golan is a sacred and nonnegotiable cause for Syria, and that Israel must fully withdraw from the Golan and southern Lebanon if the peace process is to arrive at its aspired objective. Nobody can regard this stand as inflexibility. Rather, it is a legitimate and fair right approved by the U.S. initiative and acknowledged by the United Nations through clear resolutions on the basis of which the peace process took off.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: The Israeli Government should take more serious steps to enable the peace process to move toward a just, comprehensive peace that really prepares the region for entering an era of security and stability.

Paper on Need for Change in Israeli Stand

JN1912110495 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0835 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus,19 Dec (SANA) — In a commentary, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that despite the importance of the successful U.S. effort to break the stalemate on the Syrian track, which lasted for more than six months, it amounts merely to a revival of the talks. What is more important is Washington's success in bringing about a practical change in the Israeli position toward responding to the requirements of real peace in a manner that paves the way for progress.

The newspaper says the resumption of the talks is not an objective but a means that will continue to be abstract unless it is coupled with determination, goes beyond words, and moves to positive action and implementation on the ground of the principles of peace in accordance with the Madrid formula. This is something that Israel has not so far done. Syria, on the other hand, has been committed to and called openly for full peace in return for full Israeli withdrawal.

It says: The success of the resumed talks depends on the extent of change in the Israeli position in moving from the stage of words to the stage of implementing the conditions and requirements of real peace on the ground.

AL-THAWRAH refers to the new talk that came out of Israel yesterday concerning peace, which Israeli sources attributed to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, saying that Israel can withdraw from the Golan and southern Lebanon within a short period of time, rather than the long period that the Israelis have spoken so much about.

The paper says: If Peres really means what he says, this shows that the Israeli insistence on withdrawal over a long period was unnecessary and aimed at prolonging and aborting the negotiations in order to evade the peace requirements.

The paper stresses: If Peres' talk is accompanied by real action, then much time can be saved to realize the aspired peace which Syria has always sought, because peace ensures security and stability in this sensitive and tense part of the world.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: This talk by Peres about quick withdrawal from the Golan and somovement," referring to the previous dismissals of Khadr Muhjiz and Mahmud AbuNuthern Lebanon will remain talk until it is confirmed in the coming Washington talks.

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Afghanistan

Government: Taleban Arms Depot Destroyed in Blast

BK1812105095 Hong Kong AFP in English 1001 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec 18 (AFP) — A massive blast has destroyed tonnes of ammunition held by the Taleban militia at a depot southwest of the besieged Afghan capital, Defence Ministry sources said Monday [18 December].

About 50 truckloads of rockets, tank and artillery rounds and small arms ammunition were destroyed in the explosion in Taleban-held Wardak province late Saturday, they said.

No independent confirmation of the explosion was immediately available.

"It was a huge stockpile of ammunition which had been destined for the Taleban fighters battling our forces around Kabul," an official said.

"This constituted a significant material loss to the enemy," he added, without specifying what caused the blast.

Meanwhile, government troops clashed with Islamic militia fighters on a front line south of Kabul late Sunday, firing missiles, rockets and artillery at Taleban positions near Rish Khvor, which lies five kilometers (three miles) from Kabul's southern suburbs, army sources said.

The firefight lasted several hours but did not result in any change in the frontlines, they added.

The Taleban, who already control about two-thirds of Afghanistan, have been encamped on three major fronts around the capital, which they have vowed to seize from the government.

The Islamic warriors intend to oust the administration of President Borhanoddin Rabbani and install Islamic law across the country, wracked by 16 years of almost constant war.

'Internal Difference' Blamed

LD1812171095 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An explosion occurred at a large Taleban ammunition dump in Wardag Province last night. Reports reaching BAKHTAR say that thousand of rounds of the light and heavy weapons ammunition were burned and a number of vehicles destroyed in the explosion. It was planned for 50 truckloads of ammunition to be transferred from the dump at Sesesio Ghonday to the frontlines of the hireling Taleban. The cause of the explosion, which continued until early morning, is so far unknown. But it is said the internal difference in the Taleban is the cause of this incident. This is the umpteenth time that an explosion occurs at a hireling Taleban's ammunition dump.

Dostam Bolsters Troops on Key Frontline

BK1712123095 Hong Kong AFP in English 1151 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec 17 (AFP) — Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostam is boosting his troop numbers on a key front in Afghanistan where he has been locked in a tense stand-off with Afghan Government forces, the Defence Ministry said Sunday [17 December].

"Dostam has moved troops and weapons to Khenjan which we consider to be an unusual movement of troops," a defence official said, adding that "this is a major troop movement concentrated on a particular area, making it unusual."

"The situation is normal and there has been no conflict with Dostam yet, but we do not know what his intentions are," the official said.

The Defence Ministry claim coincided with press reports in Pakistan that a three-faction anti-Kabul government alliance and the Taleban militia have signed an agreement for a joint attack on Kabul.

The alliance includes Dostam's Junbish Milli, former premier Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Eslami [Islamic Party] and the Hezb-e-Wahdat [Unity Party] faction (Khalili group).

Pakistan-based sources said negotiations had been going on with the Taleban but that an agreement was yet to be formally concluded.

Travellers who recently visited Dostam's northern stronghold of Mazaar-i-Sharif, reported seeing large troop movements in the area.

The officials here refused to say whether the government was expecting an imminent attack by Dostam's troops in the mountainous Khenjan area.

But observers here said a build-up near the Salang frontline 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of the besieged Afghan capital could be a prelude to an attack by Dostam on government forces after several months of "unofficial ceasefire" between the two factions in the area.

The front divides the government-controlled territory north of Kabul from Dostam's northern powerbase.

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Dostam's Jonbesh-e-Melli-e [National Islamic Movement] faction last year split from the government and joined forces with the Hezb-e-Eslami and the Shia Moslem Hezb-E-Wahdat in a bid to seize power from the government of President Borhanoddin Rabbani.

The opposition factions were later routed from the capital, although skirmishes continued in other parts of the country.

Over recent months, fighting between the presidential forces and the coalition of opposition groups has died down, while the government has battled to defend its territory from the Islamic Taleban movement which has swept across about two thirds of Afghanistan in the past 15 months.

Government Forces Launch Attack South of Kabul

'Major Ground Offensive'

BK1912080895 Hong Kong AFP in English 0751 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rish Khvor, Afghanistan, Dec 19 (AFP) — Afghan government troops launched a major ground offensive against the Taleban militia here early Tuesday [19 December], defence and army officials said.

Government commanders said up to 2,000 troops were used in the six-pronged attack aimed at recapturing the strategic Kheyrabad hills, about seven kilometers (four miles) from Kabul's southern suburbs.

The attack which began at 6:00am (0130 GMT), came after a fierce Taleban rocket and artillery barrage of government posts near this frontline village, they said.

"This is a major offensive launched to counter a Taleban attack. God willing, it will prove strong enough to drive the enemy right out of the Kheyrabad hills, making Kabul safe for civilians again," one official said.

No independent confirmation of the size of the offensive or its progress was immediately available. But heavy exchanges of artillery and rocket fire continued Tuesday morning.

'Heavy Casualties' for Taleban

LD1912104295 Tehran IRNA in English 0929 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 19, IRNA — Forces loyal to President Borhanoddin Rabbani launched offensives against Taleban positions near Rish Khvor and Gol-Baq, southwest of Kabul, early on Tuesday [19 December] morning. Confirming that state forces have started the attacks, government sources said they were aimed at disturbing Taleban movements.

The Taleban sustained heavy casualties during the assaults which lasted for more than two hours, claimed Afghanistan Defense Ministry sources, adding that parts of the Taleban bunkers in Rish Khvor were taken over by government troops. No further reports were released but the explosions which were heard in Kabul Tuesday morning died away after two hours.

It is said that the Talebans, being informed of the outbreak of battles in the northern Salang region, in Baghlan Province, between government forces and those of the Islamic Movement led by General Dostam, intended to step up their attacks around Kabul and put more pressure on the government.

After a four-month unofficial cease-fire, General Dostam's Islamic Movement resumed its war against government forces in Khanjan, in northern Salang, beginning Monday afternoon.

Further on Clash

BK1912110395 Hong Kong AFP in English 1036 GMT 19 Dec 95

[Report by Marc Lavine]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, Dec 19 (AFP) — Afghan government forces launched a ground offensive against the Taleban Islamic militia near Kabul on Tuesday [19 December] while holding off another warlord on a new front.

The latest intensification of the battle for Kabul saw forces loyal to President Borhanoddin Rabbani carry out a ground, air and artillery strike on Taleban fighters south of the city, defence officials and army commanders said.

The new crisis point emerged north of the capital, where Rabbani's commanders were attacked by the army of former communist general 'Abdol Rashid Dostam near the strategic Salang pass. A defence source said the attack failed.

The offensive against the Taleban saw early morning air raids on the Islamic militia's positions and rocket and artillery exchanges, defence officials and commanders said.

Intense heavy weapon fire in both directions continued into the afternoon, though defence officials said the move into the Taleban positions in the Kheyrabad hills, about seven kilometers (four miles) from Kabul's southern suburbs, had ended.

"Our ground attack went very well and we advanced quickly seizing two Taleban posts in the Kheyrabad hills, hopefully we will push them out of the area soon,"

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Major Abdul Rahim told A, a frontline commander, told AFP.

No independent confirmation of the size of the offensive or the extent of any government advance was immediately available.

Commanders said up to 2,000 troops were used in a six-pronged attack aimed at recapturing the Kheyrabad hills. Defence officials said the figure was lower though.

Foreign observers said the government wants to flush the Taleban out of the hills to protect Kabul from rocket attacks and threaten the Taleban base at Chahar Asiab, 25 kilometers (15 miles) from Kabul, which is dominated by the hills.

Kabul hospitals reported that at least two civilians were killed and 28 injured by rocket fire and shrapnel around the clashes. But there were no reports of military casualties.

The Taleban have been besieging Kabul on three fronts since mid-October, threatening to seize the capital and topple the president.

Dostam, an ethnic Uzbek leader, who controls half a dozen provinces of north Afghanistan, launched a long awaited attack late Monday on government forces north of the Salang tunnel.

"Troops loyal to the government foiled a military attempt by Dostam at Khenjan," said a ministry of defense source.

"The enemy attacked our positions but could not make any progress and failed to achieve their goal which was to capture government positions heading towards the Salang tunnel," he added.

Khenjan is near the Salang tunnel on the main road linking Kabul and the north of the country where Dostam maintains his stronghold at Mazaar e-Sharif.

Observers said that if Dostam captured the area, he could threaten Bagram air base, the only working airport serving Kabul.

The two sides have been facing each other off in the area for nearly two years, but no fighting had taken place for several months. Dostam is reported to be considering an alliance with the government or the Taleban.

The area was calm Tuesday, the source said, adding that presidential troops remained on the alert.

Dostam was defence minister in Afghanistan's last communist government but broke away in 1993 and joined former premier Golboddin Hekmatyar's forces when they unsuccessfully attacked Kabul in 1994.

The United Nations meanwhile called for three million dollars of emergency aid for Kabul's civilian population.

"Winter has come early and hard," Martin Barber, UN Coordinator for Emergency Humanitarian Programme for Afghanistan told a news conference in Islamabad.

Heavy snow has blocked roads while the new fighting has badly affected the civilian population, already suffering in temperatures way below freezing point.

Barber said a plan to provide food, shelter and limited income for Kabul's most vulnerable families needed another three million dollars.

Ambassador to Iran Discusses Taleban Group

NC1412101995 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 29 Nov 95 pp 1, 11

["Exclusive" interview with Ambassador to Iran Seyyed Mohammad Kheyrkhah by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] What is new?

[Kheyrkhah] Unfortunately, the news from our country these days is disturbing; the people of Afghanistan are in distress and mourning. Persistent crimes by the Taleban Group, toward which the world seems indifferent, have robbed our nation of tranquility. If the Talebans are at war with our government, why should the nation suffer such savage attacks and massacres? If the war is a war, it should be fought on the fronts, not in people's homes. This is nothing but crime and oppression and the governments and organizations that support the Taleban Group are accomplices.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Ambassador, you referred to the Talebans and their foreign mentors. Who are these mentors? Which governments? Can you accuse any government of supporting the Talebans? If yes, please give us the details, because it is easy to accuse a government and easy to deny these accusations immediately, thus hiding the truth.

[Kheyrkhah] Throughout the occupation of Afghanistan and during the incidents of the past 16 years, none of the Afghan people heard about the Talebans. This group did not exist until a year ago. It appeared spontaneously. How can a new group suddenly emerge and become the superior group in Afghanistan, in terms of arms, training, personnel, and money? How can it occupy many areas and even threaten Kabul, which is the center of Afghan rule? The question the Afghan people are asking is: If the Talebans are a group of religious scholars, then where have they acquired so many pilots, airplanes, tanks, and military forces? How are their

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needs in aircraft fuel, maintenance, and spare parts met? How did they reoperate the planes that were scrapped at Shindand Air Base or Qandahar? Where have the Talebans acquired the thousands or tens of thousands of rockets, missiles, bombs, and bullets? Does this not show that they have strong economic support from abroad?

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] The Taleban Group maintains that the arms it uses are weapons confiscated during its attacks. And they took the planes from Shindand Air Base, as Your Excellency pointed out.

[Kheyrkhah] They were armed from the start. From the start their attacks had logistic support from abroad. You cannot carry out an attack and take booty emptyhanded. A confiscated tank is of no value on its own; it is the materiel used by the tank that is needed to advance the war. Who sends all this materiel to the Talebans? Unfortunately, there is no control of our country's southern border and every day a large volume of military materiel enters Afghanistan across this border. Wounded Talebans are now being treated in Pakistani hospitals. The Taleban force trains in Pakistan's military camps then enters the country in military convoys. What else could be clearer? As long as such interference in Afghanistan exists, the country's problem will not be solved.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Do you consider foreign interference to come solely from the direction of Pakistan?

[Kheyrkhah] For now, Pakistan's interference is clearer, proven more than interference by any other. Any government that wants to interfere in Afghanistan's affairs does so through Pakistan. So we can now name Pakistan as the foreign force interfering in Afghanistan's affairs. The Pakistanis even justify and defend the rights of the Talebans and their crimes and behavior to the world.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Do you not consider the visit by Robin Rafael, U.S. assistant secretary of state responsible for Pakistan, and the overt expression of his and his government's support for the Taleban Group in the Afghan crisis to be a sign of U.S. interference in your country's domestic affairs?

[Kheyrkhah] The Americans have not yet declared their official stance on Afghanistan. Statements by an assistant [secretary of state] in a country neighboring Afghanistan cannot be considered proof of his government's interference in Afghanistan's domestic affairs. But we believe his remarks on Afghanistan could stem from Pakistan's political activities. In the same way that the Pakistani Government supports the Taleban militarily, it also supports and justifies the group's political aspect by excusing its activities on the international scene. Bhutto's visit to Tehran should be seen within this context.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] In her political speech to the Majles during her visit to Tehran, Bhutto said that those who believe Pakistan is interfering in Afghanistan are "insane, out of their minds."

[Kheyrkhah] Yes. I heard that too. But you can see for yourself. While she was speaking to the Iranian Majles, the Pakistani foreign minister was illegally entering Afghanistan and visiting our northern areas—without a visa—to meet General Dostam. Did this illegal visit show any overt and ugly interference by Pakistan in Afghanistan's domestic affairs? Is Afghanistan a Pakistani province for Dostam to allow such a visit? From which official Afghan authority did the Pakistani foreign minister receive permission to carry out this visit?

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] You have made particular efforts internationally to explain the Pakistanis' interference. How successful have you been?

[Kheyrkhah] Unfortunately, our world has forgotten Afghanistan. While we were resisting the aggressive Russian forces, the West's capitalist governments supported us. But when Russian interference ended so did international support.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Why?

[Kheyrkhah] Because our struggles against the interfering Russian forces in those years conformed with the West's interests. The Westerners—like us—opposed the Russian aggression and expansionism. But with an end to the Russian aggression, the Westerners had no reason to continue supporting us, especially when they saw that the jehadi groups with an Islamic identity intended to establish Islamic rule in the country.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Ambassador, the Pakistani Government claims that the Kabul government is receiving military support from the Indians and that India is placing its materiel at Kabul's disposal. Is this accusation correct?

[Kheyrkhah] This accusation is merely a political justification used as a smokescreen for the Pakistanis to interfere in Afghanistan's domestic affairs. Otherwise, everyone knows we have positive relations with the Indians, as we do with all other countries. Our sincere relations cannot be used as grounds for such baseless political accusations.

Since the Pakistanis themselves are against the Indians, they do not want India to support us. But healthy

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and sincere relations with India cannot be considered as interference in Afghanistan's domestic affairs. The Pakistanis want to play the role of our guardian, insisting that we hate whatever they hate and vice versa. We will never accept this.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Ambassador, some of Afghanistan's domestic and foreign problems stem from Rabbani not wanting to give in to free elections and not being willing to step down.

[Kheyrkhah] Any group that wants to come to power in Afghanistan should note that it cannot rule without considering the votes and views of the other groups. We have repeatedly stated our agreement that all the groups can come and share power. We say a joint commission should be formed to determine the structure of the government by considering all the ethnic, racial, and religious groups. But our problem lies in the Talebans accepting no one but themselves. The Talebans want to gain absolute power in Afghanistan. They tell us to surrender and to hand in our arms and continue with our jobs so that they can determine our future. No sane person can accept this; we will strongly oppose it. In answer to your question, we do not oppose the transfer of power. It is the Talebans who oppose any solution and talks for a just settlement of the crisis.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Who should implement this plan?

[Kheyrkhah] I said a commission comprising representatives from all the groups should be formed to decide on the future of the country.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] But you know the jehadi groups cannot even achieve a cease-fire among themselves. You say the formation of a joint commission is a good start to a solution. I say that before this happens, the war should cease. First, the conflicting sides should be convinced not to fire at each other. Is this not so?

[Kheyrkhah] That is our problem. Our enemies, headed by the Talebans, want to have the last say in the war. They do not even trust Hekmatyar's group, which is of their own race, and they have repeatedly said that they do not want to share power with anyone. This is why Hekmatyar does not trust the Talebans and cannot agree with them on power.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Are you sure you can achieve your goals by continuing the war?

[Kheyrkhah] We can safeguard Kabul and our strongholds. Kabul is not an area anyone can infiltrate. But we do not believe the war is a logical solution to the crisis.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] The facts show that Rabbani's government is passive when it comes to its confrontation with the Talebans. Incoming reports speak of Taleban offensives and a government forces' defensive. Why has this happened? Has the Kabul government lost the initiative to act?

[Kheyrkhah] No. We still have that initiative. But I agree with the first part of your question—we are constantly on the defensive, not offensive, against the Talebans and all the other groups that are at war with the government. We believe war and bloodshed are not a suitable answer to the crisis. Even if the Taleban stopped fighting, we would not initiate a war with it [as published].

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Can you say how much of Afghanistan the current government controls? And can you say how Afghanistan has been divided among the various groups?

[Kheyrkhah] No, we cannot quantify this, because some of the occupied areas are constantly changing because of the war. In many of the areas occupied by the Talebans or other groups, the people are sincerely on our side. We cannot say which area is under the influence of which group.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Ambassador, why did Herat fall? Was the Taleban powerful or was your government weak? Do you not think General Isma'il Khan, the governor of Herat, might have committed treason, as happened on the Chahar Asiab front, where the Talebans quickly dominated this area?

[Kheyrkhah] No. I do not believe in any way that Isma'il Khan committed treason, and I do not believe that the Talebans were capable of doing this. There were three reasons for the fall of Herat:

1. Foreign interference: Herat fell following a foreign plan, with foreign support, for the Taleban group. The plan was that after occupying Chahar Asyab, the Talebans intended to carry out an all-out attack on Kabul. But they retreated after suffering heavy blows by government forces. This retreat was a blow to the Talebans' prestige. Thus, the same forces that supported the Talebans directed them in the assault on Herat in order to make up for this.

2. Dispersed battles of attrition, which took place inside Herat between Isma'il Khan's forces against the Talebans on one side and Dostam on the other, had tired the forces [in Herat].

3. The differences in taste of the local commanders often disagreed. This laid the grounds for the Talebans' attack and prevented an effective resistance against them. The people too were tired; and there were no reserve forces that could be used.

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[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Where have the efforts by Mr. Rabbani's government to regain Herat, namely the preparing of manpower on the borders, led?

[Kheyrkhah] These efforts are continuing so that operations for Herat's liberation will be carried out at an opportune moment. The reports we are receiving now say that in this city and in other places under the Talebans' occupation, there is strong hatred amongst the people of this group. This hatred is itself a strong point for us.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] How do you know about this hatred amongst the people?

[Kheyrkhah] From the way the Talebans are treating the people. The Talebans are a bigoted, retrogressive, and criminal group. They have severed the hands and feet of people in areas under their occupation on the smallest provocation and they call this crime— which is perpetrated without the presence of a shar' magistrate or Islamic arbitration—Islamic punishment. They are against the rights of women. They deprive women of social activities, education, walking in the streets, going for their daily shopping, and anything else that calls for a woman's presence outside her home. The objective is to paint a distorted picture of Islam. They do not oppose the overt trade of drugs, namely heroin and opium. In other words, a drug smuggler has rights in the areas under Taleban rule.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Mr. Ambassador, your government has accepted a recent plan by the UN envoy on Afghan affairs, Mahmoud Mestiri. Can you please explain this plan?

[Kheyrkhah] Yes, this plan is—as we wanted—based on the formation of a joint commission comprising 28 people selected from Afghanistan's racial, party, ethnic, and religious groups. However, the Talebans have opposed this plan because, as we said, they believe in gaining absolute power in the country and they are not prepared to share power with any other group.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Do you agree with the composition of the 28- man group as envisaged by the United Nations in view of the fact that all your rival groups are included in it?

[Kheyrkhah] Yes. This is the only alternative.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] But this commission, and the formation of a coalition government, are previously defeated experiences. Therefore, do you not think that the United Nations is today reintroducing the same plan that it failed to implement in the past?

[Kheyrkhah] We have no other alternative now but this plan. Otherwise, we will only see the shadow of war and bloodshed extending over all Afghanistan.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Mr. Ambassador, recently Mr. Rabbani's government started talks with Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party]. What were the objectives behind these talks and where did they lead?

[Kheyrkhah] These talks manifest our belief in the significance of talks instead of war. We are holding talks not only with Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami, but with all the political and ethnic groups and parties in Afghanistan so that we can find a solution to the crisis. We have always believed that the country's problems can be solved through better understanding and talks.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Are you holding talks with the Hezb-e Wahdat [Unity Party]? I am referring to the group that was led by the martyred Mazari.

[Kheyrkhah] Yes. We know Khalili, one of the members of the Coordination Council, cannot make any decisions on his own but we will continue our policy. But it is the Hezb-e Wahdat that should review its political policy and methods. The Hezb-e Wahdat struck up an alliance with the Talebans leading to Mazari's martyrdom by the Talebans. The martyr Mazari's Hezb-e Wahdat developed a friendship with all the enemies of the Kabul government, that is, the Talebans, Hekmatyar, Dostam, and so on.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] And you supported the faction that branched off from the Hezb-e Wahdat and opposed it, that is, Akbari's faction?

[Kheyrkhah] No, I disagree. This was not our choice. This was a policy that Mazari's Hezb-e Wahdat created. But we all believe in the need for coordination and unification. We have more things in common with the Hezb-e Wahdat than we have differences. On this basis, we will continue our contacts with all the sides.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Ambassador, how do you see the future of Afghanistan?

[Kheyrkhah] I am not optimistic about the immediate future. But I believe that all the problems, God willing, will be solved eventually and that the oppressed people of Afghanistan will achieve peace and tranquility.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Thank you.

[Kheyrkhah] May you succeed.

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Bangladesh

Election Commission Meets on Election Schedule

Meeting Includes Political Parties

BK1412160695 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Election Commission's district offices will remain open tomorrow to facilitate the registration of names by eligible voters who have not registerd their names on the electoral list. The Election Commission has requested the people who have not yet been able to register their names on the list to do so. The commission has also appealed to political leaders and activists as well as social workers to cooperate in this regard.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has called a meeting of all political parties at the commission's office in Dhaka tomorrow morning to exchange views on the schedule for the coming parliamentary elections.

Parties Ask To Defer Elections

BK1512150595 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A meeting between the Election Commission [EC] and the country's political parties was held in Dhaka today to discuss the schedule for the upcoming parliamentary elections. The meeting was presided over by Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque. Addressing the occasion, Justice Sadeque said that the EC is a constitutional body and all of its activities are carried out in accordance with the country's Constitution and all other relevant laws and regulations. He said that following the dissolution of the parliament on 24 November, it became imperative to hold the elections by 21 February. Justice Sadeque said that keeping in view the holy month of Ramadan and 'Id al-Fitr festival, the commission has set 18 January as the date for the elections. Ramadan will begin the last week of January and 'Id al-Fitr will be celebrated in February.

The chief election commissioner informed the meeting that most of the political parties have requested verbally, or in writing, to reconsider the election schedule as no agreement could yet be reached among the political parties. The representatives of political parties at the meeting expressed their opinion to defer the election and set a date in the month of Ramadan so as to facilitate the participation of all political parties. The meeting was also informed of the various steps taken to ensure the holding of elections in a free, fair and impartial manner. They include the EC taking control of the administration and the government media and law and order enforcement agencies, the issuing of instructions to recover illegal arms and ammunition and explosives, and the establishment of a law and order control cell at the EC Secretariat, and broadcasting news about all political parties over the radio and television.

The chief election commissioner again sought the cooperation of all political parties in holding the coming parliamentary elections in a free, fair and impartial manner. The meeting was attended by 86 representatives of seven political parties. Election Commissioner Justice Abdul Jalil and EC secretary Mohammad Ershadul Haq were also present at the meeting.

Elections Rescheduled for 7 Feb

BK1512152995 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Election Commission [EC] has rescheduled the general elections in the country for 7 February. A press release by the commission says the election schedule was revised in view of a meeting between the commission and representatives of political parties in Dhaka today. The holy month of Ramadan and the 'Id al-Fitr festival were taken into consideration in deciding on the revised schedule.

According to the revised schedule, 3 January has been fixed as the new last day for filing nomination papers to returning officers and assistant returning officers. Returning officers will scrutinize the nomination papers on 4 January. The last day for withdrawing candidacies is 9 January. The EC has called upon all political parties, contesting candidates, and all concerned to maintain the sanctity of the holy month of Ramadan during the election process.

In view of the revised election schedule, the EC has extended the deadline for wiping out election campaign slogans written on walls to 25 December. Legal steps will be taken against relevant individuals if any writing on walls is witnessed after 25 December. Police have already been asked to take the necessary steps against violators of this order. [passage omitted]

Chinese Naval Force Delegation Arrives on Visit

BK1412065695 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A six-member delegation of the Chinese naval forces arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh. The delegation led by Vice Admiral Zhu Jiang Chong called on Chief of Naval Staff Read Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed separately. The delegation will also call on Chief of

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Army Staff Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim.

India

Foreign Minister Denies Nuclear Test Plans

BK1912130995 Hong Kong AFP in English 1256 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, Dec 19 (AFP) — Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee denied Tuesday [19 December] that India had any plans to conduct a nuclear test.

Mukherjee, asked by reporters at a news conference here whether India was making preparations to hold a nuclear test, replied: "My answer is: No."

He dismissed a report in The New York Times last week which said US intelligence officials suspected India was planning to stage a nuclear blast at its Pokharan test site in the desert state of Rajasthan.

"Those reports are speculative and baseless," Mukherjee said.

"Our prime minister (P.V. Narasimha Rao) has formulated our nuclear policy very clearly. We have the capability but we deliberately opted not to manufacture nuclear weapons," he said. "Our nuclear program is for peaceful purposes."

India staged a nuclear test at its Pokharan test site in 1974.

Report on Pokharan Site, Missle Test Preparation

BK1912074695 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English 19 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Pravin Sawhney]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London Dec. 18 — India is preparing to test the Prithvi missile with a conventional warhead to its maximum range of 150 km at Pokharan. It was this activity that the US spy satellite picked up and which intelligence officials suspected as India's preparation for another nuclear test.

Under pressure from the Army and also as a signal to the US that weapons package for Pakistan will inevitably set off an arms race in the subcontinent, India appears to have finally decided to start full scale production of Prithvi missiles. But that can be done only after the end-user is confident of the functioning of the weapons system under field conditions. The Prithvi missile has never been tested on a land target. It has been successfully tested over sea from the Interim Test Range in Orissa up to a range of 68 km on Wheeler Island.

A land test is possible only at Pokharan, where India conducted a nuclear test in 1974 and where an acquired massive range is available for the purpose. The Pokharan range is divided into four parts: range A for artillery firing which needs a maximum open area of 40 km, range B is traditionally for amour exercises, range C is for the Indian Air Force and range D, where the 1974 peaceful nuclear implosion was conducted, is condoned off as restricted area.

The only normal activity at range D is the movement of a few security guards and an engineer platoon of the Army. Scientists are known to move in and out of this area, but the overall activity is minimal. Now with India planning to test Prithvi there, the activity at D range has picked up.

US spy satellites spotted this, and leaked it to the media to find out if India was planning a second nuclear test. India strongly denied the report in the New York Times. Both Washington and New Delhi are right — the former in spotting movement at Pokharan and the latter in saying no nuclear test was being planned.

Senior officers of the Indian artillery had told The Asian Age in June 1994 that the government had cleared firing of a salvo of four Prithvi at Pokharan. This was to be done as part of an exercise to also test the mobility and preparation of the missile under field conditions. The latter is crucial as Prithvi uses a liquid propellant which is highly toxic and corrosive.

The earlier plan to fire at Pokharan was shelved after Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to Washington in May 1994. The Army was told to cancel the scheduled firing in view of the proximity of the Pokharan ranges to the border with Pakistan. The test was then conducted on June 4, 1994 from the Interim Test Range in Orissa, and was called a user test since instead of scientists the user fired the missile. It is possible India was under US pressure not to test Prithvis on land, although the Prime Minister told the Lok Sabha on 13 June, 1994 that he had not discussed India's missile programme with President Clinton during their meeting in Washington. Senior officers of artillery had told this correspondent in July 1995 that they were not happy with the Prithvi user test under controlled conditions. They had insisted that only tests under real bath field conditions can instill the required level of confidence in the users. [sentence as published]

Official on Peaceful Nature of Nuclear Program

BK1912034795 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has reiterated that the country's nuclear program is extensive

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and geared exclusively toward peaceful purposes. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha yesterday, the minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, said that the nation's position on Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, NPT, enjoys national consensus. He said while New Delhi is opposed to the NPT since it is discriminatory, the country remains committed to the goal of nonproliferation. He said India will continue to work for achieving genuine nonproliferation through elimination of nuclear weapons. He stated that the country's security situation is constantly under review and the government will take all necessary measures to cope with any threat that may be posed to the security of the country.

'External Pressure' on Nuclear Program Rejected

BK1912035095 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress-I today asserted that it would not succumb to external pressure in regard to the country's nuclear policy. The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told reporters in New Delhi that history of the Congress Party is a proof to this.

Mr. Gadgil was reacting to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement. Mr. Vajpayee in a press release has urged the government not to come under any pressure from the United States on the country's nuclear policy. He said THE NEW YORK TIMES report alleging that India is preparing for a nuclear test is deliberately planted by the U.S. Government to pressurize New Delhi in the ongoing negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Dailies View U.S. Pressure Over Nuclear Tests

BK1912075095

[FBIS Editorial Report] Three Indian English-language dailies carry editorials reacting to U.S. pressure following reports that Delhi may be planning to resume nuclear testing.

Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English on 18 December carries a 413-word editorial on page 8 entitled "India Must Stand Firm." The editorial says that Western powers are sure to redouble pressure on India to desist from nuclear testing following U.S. intelligence reports about scientific and technical activity at the Pokharan test site.

The editorial says: "Indeed, these intelligence leaks are so vague with regard to the actual purpose of the activity at the former test site that they should be construed as part of the continuing effort to keep India in line on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. Whatever the nature of work at Pokharan, India ought not to succumb to foreign pressures."

The editorial continues: "It is essential to question the real objectives of the CTBT as India has been doing this year by refusing to co-sponsor the UN resolution and insisting on linkages with disarmament by the five nuclear powers. Public pronouncements by US officials have made it abundantly clear that the momentum behind the CTBT comes from Washington's own perception of the non-proliferation agenda and not from any intention to make it an effective instrument of nuclear disarmament. What jeopardises the CTBT is not presumed Indian nuclear plans at Pokharan but the actions of the exclusive nuclear club, which wants to continue enjoying the privileged acquisitions of the nuclear haves."

Commenting on nuclear tests by China and France and on U.S. plans for "certain types of tests," the editorial concludes: "It should be self-evident, therefore, that these countries are in no position to take the moral high ground on the question of nuclear testing. There is no reason for the Government of India to be defensive about its revised stance on the CTBT. India has supported a universal and comprehensive test ban treaty for several decades but as long as the current treaty is designed to be applied selectively and to evade the question of nuclear disarmament, it is necessary to remain sceptical about its usefulness."

Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English carries a 451-word editorial on page 8 entitled "A Test Balloon," which describes the report in THE NEW YORK TIMES [NYT] that India is planning a new test as "pre- emptive in nature." Explaining that the report about nuclear tests appeared following Delhi's decision not to cosponsor a UN resolution on a nuclear test ban, the editorial says that Washington must have viewed this decision as evidence that India was reneging on its assurances that it supported the CTBT. The editorial adds that India's position on the CTBT might also encourage other countries to express reservations about the CTBT.

The paper says: "This would upset the Clinton administration's plan to put the CTBT in place by autumn next year, on the eve of the US presidential election. After the NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty] and the West Asian and Bosnian peace treaties, the CTBT could be the crowning glory in Mr Clinton's quest for global peace, and his claim for re-election."

The editorial adds: "The third factor explaining the timing may be the imminent Indian general election. With neither a favourable wave nor major issues to exploit, Mr Narasimha Rao's Congress party stands a fair chance of winning if he undertakes fresh nuclear

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tests which would be widely seen by Indian voters as the act of a brave national hero. Washington may have reckoned that the best way to pre-empt India from conducting a nuclear test is by sowing doubts about its intentions without actually accusing it of defying the West."

The editorial concludes: "If Mr Rao has any thoughts about a nuclear test, he should not feel inhibited by indirect and diplomatic pressure from the US. Unlike the demand for weaponisation of the nuclear option, as demanded by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], the alternative to the Congress, Mr Rao can argue that he needs the tests for improving upon India's nuclear technology. The track record of US foreign policy shows, that it accepts actions by countries that enhance its larger objective; Pakistan made its atomic bomb after letting itself be used as a springboard for US sponsored Afghan resistance against the Soviets. Mr Rao does not have to conduct a nuclear test to justify the NYT story, but if he carries out one he would have most of the nation behind him."

Delhi THE HINDU in English on 18 December carries a 720-word editorial on page 12 entitled "Preserving India's Sovereignty." It says: "It is not surprising that India's principled decision to make its own policy choices in the matter of the development of nuclear weapons has come under sharper pressure in recent weeks. The intelligence leaks to two major American dailies that India was preparing for a nuclear test, even as State Department officials chose to react promptly to these inspired revelations with expressions of concern, indicate that the nuclear non-proliferation agenda of the Clinton administration is very much in focus."

The editorial continues: "The prime targets of this agenda remain India and Pakistan, which much to the exasperation of the United States, refused to join the Nonproliferation Treaty which was given a fresh lease of life last May. The Clinton administration views the wrapping up of the indefinite extension of the NPT as a personal triumph and has now set its sights on the proposal for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty which it hopes will be ready for signing by the autumn of 1996 and a global convention on the capping of the production of fissile material. Given the unstated thrust of this strategic design, which is the retention of nuclear weapons capability by the United States and the other nuclear weapons powers while denying the rest of the world such capability, India has no other option but to remain wary of the repeated attempts to draw it into the nonproliferation net."

The editorial says that the nuclear powers do not really view the NPT as a program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It adds: "The expressed concern over nuclear testing reflects anxiety that the developing countries outside the NPT framework might be acquiring such capability."

The editorial says that India need not be seduced by the logic that the CTBT or the convention on the capping of fissile material production are nondiscriminatory and global in nature.

It says: "The very fact that France and China have been proceeding with their own nuclear tests indicates that their programmes are still a little behind that of the U.S. The real advantage for the U.S. in the signing of the CTBT would be that countries like India and Pakistan, which might be at the stage where nuclear tests are still required, will not be able to proceed further in the development of their programmes, and would be frozen at an inferior level of capability. India's argument that it will not enter discriminatory or non global arrangements to curb nuclear weapons capability is now being met in a narrow and technical sense. It will be a mistake to be trapped in the technicality of the 'global' arrangement. If India had earlier enthusiastically championed the idea of a CTBT, it was in a totally different context. The ground realities have drastically changed."

The editorial concludes: "This country need not be defensive about its refusal to go along with the strategic design that underlies the current efforts at nuclear non-proliferation. These efforts are less about disarmament than about making sure other countries do not acquire the capability that the nuclear powers already have and intend to keep. Therefore, they carry very little moral credibility. India has a sovereign right to make its own choices in regard to its own national security and should persevere with its own principled course in this arena, however formidable the challenges might be."

Reportage on Reactions to U.S. Report of Test

Official: Report 'Irresponsible'

BK1912103095 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 17 Dec 95 p 9

[Report by Srinivas Laxman: "NYT Report on N-Test a Big Lie: Ramanna"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Scientists who were involved with the first atomic bomb test at Pokharan in Rajasthan on May 16, 1974, today expressed shock at a report published in The New York Times [NYT] yesterday that India was on the verge of a second test.

"Nonsense", said the father of the first Indian atomic bomb Raja Ramanna. Describing the report as "a big

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lie", he said. "They want to get us into trouble. The NYT hates us and they are pro-Pakistan".

Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) R. Chidambaram said: "I do not have to respond to every irresponsible report in the American media."

Former AEC chairman Homi Sethna chose not to comment. Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) A.N. Prasad called it a "speculative report". Satellites keep recording various types of activities, he added.

The newspaper had reported that in recent weeks American spy satellites had recorded scientific and technical activity at Pokharan. In 1974, US spy satellites missed the preparations going on for the underground explosion presumably on account of a duststorm in the area. The news of the successful test had come as a surprise to the Americans.

The man who is credited with the successful conduct of the Pokharan test, R. Dastidar, said: "Personally, I would not believe the NYT report. US sources are not trustworthy." The Americans wanted to deliberately embarrass India by showing that it was not honouring its commitments. "This is all a part of an American strategy," he added.

A few scientists, who spoke to The Times of India News Service on condition of anonymity, said the report has come at a time when there was increasing American pressure on India to fall in line with the on-going negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which is to be signed next year.

There are clear differences between the perceptions of India and the US on this issue. The Indian stand is that the CTBT should be an instrument of total disarmament and all nuclear powers should enforce a total ban on nuclear weapons.

Another scientist felt if at all India was planning another test, it was an inopportune time to carry it out. For example, the French atomic test in the Pacific had evoked widespread criticism.

Officials Angry With 'Crude Plant'

BK1912080495 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 18 Dec 95 p 1

[Article by M.D. Nalapat: "Defense Officials Upset Over Report on N-Test"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Enquiries with high officials concerned with security issues reveal anger at the report in two U.S. newspapers about the "crude plant" that India was "preparing for a second nuclear test," 21 years after the Pokharan explosion.

They claim that the planted reports are "a decoy meant to divert attention away from the U.S.' encouragement of Pakistan's efforts to develop a nuclear capability." A top-level scientist connected with defence said, "Once again the Americans are raising the India bogey to divert attention from their role in encouraging Pakistan."

Senior defence officials claim that the Clinton administration had made available satellite data to selected U.S. correspondents without informing them that Pokharan has four ranges; A,B,C and D. And of the four, only range A is meant for nuclear experiments "and here there has been no activity."

According to these officials, the activity mentioned by the spy satellites was taking place in range B and C, "which are used by the army." These ranges, along with range D (used by the Air Force) "have been the site of exercises for many years, and there is nothing unusual in this."

According to a cabinet-level official concerned with security issues, "the game plan behind the reports is to paint India as a proliferator, so that international pressure is brought to bear upon New Delhi to agree to the U.S. version of the comprehensive test ban treaty." In which version, the U.S, China, France, Russia and Britain will be able to continue proliferating new technologies of destruction, "thus making a mockery of disarmament."

Sources close to Prime Minister Narasimha Rao say that India will "insist on the 1988 Rajiv Gandhi formula, that seeks universal and total disarmament within a specified time-frame." These sources say that "the Brown amendment was the moment of truth" for the Prime Minister, who "till then had believed that the U.S. was genuinely interested in non-proliferation."

According to the cabinet source, "the only security threat faced by India is the terrorist activities engaged by Pakistan." In his view, "now that the U.S. has legitimised Pakistan's quest for the nuclear bomb, there is no value in assurances that this is a "one- time" exception.

A top scientist connected with defence pointed out that "there are three areas of research that the U.S. has been trying to choke off. The first is the design and fabrication of nuclear power packs, especially for undersea vessels. The second relates to propulsion and guidance systems for satellite launchers. The third is technology for nuclear power plants. After the Brown amendment, the period of (Indian government) neglect of these researches seems to be ending."

Scientists in defence-related fields are angry at the "systematic denial of support to critical research pro-

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grammes" and name two officials as being responsible, one of the ministry of finance and the other in the PMO [Prime Minister's Office].

"These two have sought for the past four years to block even minimum funding for research programmes that have been on line for more than 20 years. If this pair continue to wield influence for another two years, two decades of research will be lost," a senior defence scientist said, adding, that "due to the commitment of our scientists, research has continued despite crippling cuts in funding."

Meanwhile, there is satisfaction in New Delhi that the ASEAN countries have "resisted superpower pressure" and agreed to make India a full-dialogue partner. A high official concerned with international relations said that "Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore took the lead in ensuring that India was given entry."

According to this official, "the clumsy tactics of the Clinton administration will not succeed in preventing India from pushing for complete rather than partial abolition of nuclear weapons."

Radio Assails U.S. Behavior

BK1912111895 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 19 Dec 95

[Commentary by Political Commentator S.C. Bhatt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The world's biggest power has to learn to behave in a responsible manner. It has inspired two reports in newspapers in the country in the past few days against India without any basis. Everyone knows that the Americans have spy satellites known as spies in the sky to look into other people's activities. When a photographer focuses his camera on a sunbathing beauty on a beach, we all condemn it as an intrusion on privacy. But when the world's biggest power tries to spy on others and its so-called free media chime in, the reaction is somewhat unusual. Noted newspapers THE NEW YORK TIMES and THE WASHINGTON POST have lapped up information made available to them on a selective basis. They have carried reports that India is about to explode a nuclear device at the Pokharan site in its Rajasthan desert.

Twenty-one years ago a nuclear device was exploded by Indian scientists to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and tell the world that this country also has the capacity to develop nuclear devices. The world woke up and took due note of India's scientific and technological capability. But since then India has deliberately abjured any activity in the nuclear sphere without foreclosing her options. Now the U.S. spies have sold a funny story to its media which are always ready to lend credibility to the gossip circulated by Washington. Let the world know that the so-called free media in the United states are after all not so free. They can be used by the mandarins of Washington whenever they want. That there is a close nexus between the government and the so-called free media, especially in such advanced countries as the United States, has been proved once again. If President Bill Clinton needs the media to line up behind him in his foreign policy goals and thereby buttress his reelection campaign, the big newspapers are ready to carry out his bidding. The fact is that the American spy system itself is not foolproof. Some years ago, the same U.S. media had carried reports on the basis of the satellite spy data that India and Pakistan were preparing to launch a war against each other. In reality, there were only army exercises and these were seen as preparations for a war by the U.S. satellites.

The real objective of the latest reports by leading newspapers is to put pressure on India to sign a discriminatory test ban treaty. It is well-known that China has been conducting nuclear tests. Pakistan, which has received substantial help from China, has acquired the status of a nuclear power. No less a person than a former prime minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, has claimed that his country has the bomb and he should know what he was talking about. In spite of that Washington, which never tires of telling the world how concerned it is about nuclear proliferation, has recently given a huge amount of arms aid to Pakistan. France too is merrily carrying on with nuclear tests in the South Pacific. With what face the United States is putting pressure on India to sign a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty when it has not allayed India's fears about China and Pakistan. For its own reasons, Washington is going all out to help Islamabad. To divert attention from its own sins, it has to create a scare about India and claim it has satellite data to back its point of view which it gives on a platter to its servile newspapers. The world ought to remember that the only occasions when nuclear bombs were used, it was done by the United States against unarmed Japanese civilians. There is an India proverb that a cat which has killed a hundred mice is now ready to turn a holy man.

In its foreign policy objectives, the United States has always been against democracies and backed dictators and fundamentalist regimes like Pakistan. Nearly 2,000 people have been killed in the streets of Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, this year. There is total anarchy and armed men are roaming its streets while the police and security forces are killing off people in custody. The United States protests on the one hand about the custodial deaths and on the other hand encourages Islamabad with arms worth nearly $400 million. Indian

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public opinion is incensed. It wants the government not to yield to U.S. pressure. It wants the government to stand firm and protect the interests of the nation and meet its security needs. India is strongly in favor of total and complete nuclear disarmament, not a partial one which would lead some to intimidate and pressure other countries.

PRC Military Aid to Pakistan Causes 'Concern'

BK1812130295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has conveyed to China its concern over external assistance to Pakistan for stepping up its military capabilities beyond legitimate requirements. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha today, the minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, said the government is aware of the reported secret transfer of an American-built F-16 fighter aircraft by Pakistan to China. The extensive cooperation between Islamabad and Beijing in the field of defense, including transfer of sophisticated missiles and technology to Pakistan, has also been noticed.

The minister added that during bilateral interactions with the United States, India has drawn Washington's attention to the military cooperation between Pakistan and China. In reply to another question, Mr. Bhatia said India is actively participating in the ongoing negotiations in Geneva for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It is expected to be concluded next year.

Army Kills Two Pakistan 'Infiltrators' in Kashmir

BK1912080595 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, two more infiltrators from Pakistan were killed in an encounter with the Army jawans [soldiers] in Palanwala Sector early this morning. It was in the same sector where two militants were killed by the Army yesterday. They were trying to plant mines. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered from their possession.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 0729 GMT on 19 December in a similar report adds: "Indian troops shot dead two Pakistani soldiers on Tuesday [19 December] along the tense Kashmir border, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. A defense spokesman told the news agency in the Kashmir winter capital Jammu that the Pakistani soldiers were killed by Indian troops in separate incidents in the Akhnur sector of the heavily guarded frontier. It said the Pakistani soldiers, who were wearing combat uniforms, were shot dead after opening fire on Indian positions with automatic weapons."]

Iran

Majles Head Said 'Likely' Successor to Rafsanjani

NC1912123395 Paris AFP in English 1204 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 19 (AFP) — The president of the Iranian parliament 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri is a likely successor to President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in the next elections, a senior official said Tuesday [19 December].

Mohammad Javad Larijani, an influential conservative MP, told IRAN NEWS that Nateq-Nuri was a favorite choice for the Association of Militant Clergy, a religious and political organisation which dominates the Iranian establishment.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani who is serving his second term in office is not allowed under the constitution to rerun for the post in the next presidential elections to be held in June 1997.

Nateq-Nuri, around 50, is very close to Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i and is considered to be a rising star within the political circles here.

A moderate Islamic conservative who once served as interior minister, the speaker came into prominence after 1992 parliamentary elections which sidelined Islamic radicals from power.

Larijani: U.S. 'Root Cause' of Gulf Problems

LD1912162695 Tehran IRNA in English 1536 GMT 19 Dec 95

[IRNA Headline: "U.S. Root Cause of Problems in Persian Gulf Region"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 19, IRNA — Vice-Chairman of the Majles Foreign Policy commission, Mohammad Javad Larijani, said on Tuesday [19 December] that the American conspiracies and pressures are the root causes of many unwise positions taken by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

Larijani, speaking in a meeting with two Kuwaiti professors of political science, 'Abd al-Reza Asiri and Hasan Juhar, stressed that collective action for securing long-term interests of the regional countries does not please those who are after domination over the sensitive Persian Gulf region.

Referring to U.S. instigations and provocations with the aim of plundering the resources in the Persian Gulf region and attaining its ominous [words indistinct] he said Washington is engaged in adventurism rather than adopting logical policies towards the Islamic world.

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Larijani added that the American statesmen will soon be compelled to realize that their domination over Islamic countries is no longer possible.

Hezbollah Branches, Armed Groups Expected To Meet in Tehran

MM1812162795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Dec 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Hezbollah Leaders To Discuss Plan To Fight Peace Process in Tehran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Sources in Tehran announced yesterday that leaders of the various branches of Hezbollah and the armed groups allied with it in more than 12 states are expected to meet in the Iranian capital to draw up a joint strategy to fight [li mukafahat] the peace process.

The meeting is expected to be held in January on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeyni's banishment from Iran.

As is known, Hezbollah is a movement which the Iranian mullahs established in Tehran in 1975. In the eighties the movement gradually set up branches in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey, with support from the revolutionary regime in Iran. There are small branches of this international movement in a number of European states, the United States, and Canada. The Hezbollah branch in the United States consists of Iranian and Arab elements, students and businessmen. This branch held a two-day conference in Arlington, Texas, last week.

Apart from the delegation representing Hezbollah branches, the Tehran meeting will be attended by representatives of a number of extremist Palestinian, Jordanian, Sudanese, Egyptian, and Algerian groups that enjoy financial and political support from Iran.

Preparations for the conference are being made by Ahmad Jannati, a close aide to Iranian Guide 'Ali Khamene'i.

Tehran has expressed growing concern over the possibility of Syria and Israel reaching a peace agreement within the next few months. It is keen to prepare Hezbollah and the other armed groups to confront such an agreement.

Tehran is also very concerned over the defeat of armed groups in Algeria and Egypt. Some Iranian analysts consider this defeat an indication that the extremist movements' tide is declining in the region.

Some hard-line mullahs in Iran believe that "new fields of conflict" could be opened in states that have so far been affected by the growing fundamentalist tide.

In a recent speech in Tehran, Jannati stressed that the retreat of revolutionary forces in one country can be compensated for by their advance in other countries.

He said: "The main issue is that we must continue to spread the message of our revolution. The seeds we have sown will find fertile soil throughout the Islamic world and beyond." Behind the scenes among Iranian official circles sharp criticisms are being voiced of Iran's involvement and implication with the armed groups in other countries. This involvement is costing Iran huge sums of money totaling — according to some estimates — $1 billion a year, at a time when Iran is suffering from a shortage of hard currency, in addition to the fact that Iran's control of these groups has weakened substantially and rapidly.

For example, the Palestinian movement Hamas is now trying to join the mainstream of ordinary political activities in Gaza and the West Bank, contrary to Iranian views.

Extremist Sudanese groups are also pursuing their own line. As for Lebanese Hizballah, it continues to refuse to recognize Khamene'i as the "guardian" of all Muslims in the world.

Manushahr Badi [as transliterated], an Iranian analyst, says that "that could lead to consolidating or undermining relations with the extremist movement in Iran: Either Tehran will succeed in imposing total control, or else the movement will break up into groups, with each group defining its own program and using its own methods."

'Language' of UN Human Rights Resolution Deplored

LD1512155295 Tehran IRNA in English 1542 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 15, IRNA — Mahmud Mohammadi, a spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry here Friday [15 December] deplored the language of a resolution by the third commission of the United Nations on the status of the human rights in Iran. The resolution is to be reviewed by the U.N. General Assembly later on.

The spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the resolution had been adopted in a manner inconsistent with the procedural regulations of the commission and the regulations of international agencies.

Mohammadi said Iran was ready to receive a representative of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, but that the commission had decided to torpedo Iran's bid to cooperate with the human rights organization and misportray it.

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The Iranian Foreign Ministry official said the religious minorities in Iran had full liberties within the religious system of government in Iran.

The FM spokesman said the Third Commission of the United Nations had criticized absence of physical protection for members of religious minorities in Iran against whose life there had been attempts previously, but added that those behind the present resolution had never previously condemned any assassination or terror in Iran involving Muslims or non-Muslims.

The Iranian official said Iran expected that the United Nations fully observe its obligations to monitor the status of the human rights in this or that country, and without playing into the hands of certain influential countries within the world body which try to promote their own political interests by expoliting the United Nations as a forum.

He said the United Nations would lose its credibility among Muslim as well as non-Muslim nations if it would not opt to throw a word also on the positive elements (of the human rights) in Iran on its final resolution.

Velayati on Human Rights, Religious Minorities

LD1812181195 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting today with a UN human rights rapporteur Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati outlined the views of the Islamic Republic of Iran on religious freedom and human rights.

Referring to the fact that religious minorities in Iran have independent representatives in the Majles, he said: This shows that the Islamic system has given more concessions to religious minorities than Muslims in certain cases. For, under the law, every 150,000 persons in the country have the right to elect a representative to the Majles, while some minorities, with a following of only 30,000, have an independent representative in the legislative.

The foreign minister also asked the special UN human rights rapporteur to go to various parts of the country and freely observe the human rights situation from close quarters.

Minorities Enjoy More Privileges Than Muslims

LD1812202995 Tehran IRNA in English 2008 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 18, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati outlining to the United Nations special enovy the rights of religious minorities in Islamic Iran here today, pointed out that in some cases minorities in Iran are entitled to more privileges than their Muslim compatriots.

"Where on earth do you think religious minorites are treated with such open-mindedness?" Velayati asked Abdel-Fattah Amor, the special envoy of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

Velayati said that the related Islamic laws and the Constitution of Islamic Iran clearly define and give support to the various aspects of human rights.

"In the Islamic Republic of Iran religious minorities enjoy complete freedom, and on the basis of Islamic compassion, in some cases they enjoy more privileges than the Muslims," pointed out Velayati.

"For example", he elaborated, "the Jewish minority in Iran, although it numbers less than 30,000, has its own elected representative in the Islamic consultative assembly (Majles), who like all other deputies voices his views with complete freedom on various issues of the country.

"This is despite the fact that according to our Constitution, for every 100,000 Iranians there should be only one representative in the Majles."

He went on to ask the U.N. envoy whether Western states such as Britain and France give such privileges to the millions of Muslim living in their countries?

Velayati called on Amor to reflect the realities in the Islamic republic to the outside world, and expressed Iran's readiness to cooperate with the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

He also invited the U.N. envoy to make inspection visits to different parts of the country in order to become more acquainted with the individual and social freedoms in the Iran.

Seminar on Persian Gulf Issues Continues

Rafsanjani Addresses Seminar

LD1812221995 Tehran IRNA in English 2200 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 18, IRNA — President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in his address to the sixth international seminar on the Persian Gulf here today, noted the importance of the region due to its being the world's major energy reserve, and said that political, research and scientific circles should help build trust and a friendly atmosphere in the interests of regional peace and stability.

He called on Persian Gulf states to realize the need for building trust and good will in the region in order to

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counter the massive negative propaganda of the mass media and institutes of the big powers. Islamic Iran on the basis of its principled policy has always maintained that nobody should feel concern or act as a threat to the region and its neighbours, Rafsanjani specified.

Referring to regional conflicts, he said that those who feel concerned for humanity and its future should feel responsibility and attach importance to the regional fate, peace and security.

If on the surface and for the moment the military presence of big powers seems useful, "surely it will prove to be a grave loss and danger to the future of the region," said the Iranian president.

Calling as "unjust" the creating of tension among regional states, he said that under such pretexts the big powers intend to sell arms, and milk the regional states.

Rafsanjani urged regional states to learn from past experiences and to realize that threats, intimidation and military pressure will have no effect.

Referring to Iran's humanitarian efforts to restore peace and stability to the Persian Gulf, as was evident by its logical and principled stand during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the president said Iran beliefs that with setting up of friendly relations among neighbouring states, the way would be paved for resolving the existing disputes and guaranteeing the interests of the region and the world.

Before Rafsanjani's address, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati read a brief report on the aims and objectives of the 6th international seminar on the Persian Gulf entitled 'Persian Gulf and changing structure of international order.'

The two-conference which was inaugurated on Sunday [17 December] by Velayati, was attended by experts from several regional and world countries including neighbouring Iraq.

The eight countries with coastlines on the Persian Gulf are Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE and Oman. The entire northern shores of the strategic waterway forms part of Iran's territorial waters.

Official on Strategic Importance

LD1912100395 Tehran IRNA in English 0913 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 19, IRNA — The two-day sixth international seminar on the Persian Gulf and the changing structure of the international system ended its work here in the afternoon yesterday with a speech delivered by Deputy Foreign Minister for Educational and Research Affairs Abbas Maleki.

In addressing the gathering, Maleki underscored the importance of the Persian Gulf as one of the strategic regions in the world and the key role played by Iran in the region.

He stressed that regional cooperation and the establishment of best relations with neighboring states and third world nations as well as those countries which meet Iran's needs, are priorities in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic.

Thus, he noted, cooperation between Iran and the Persian Gulf states would have much importance.

During the seminar, two different viewpoints were put forward by the participating experts from various countries about the situation in the Persian Gulf, Maleki remarked, adding that one view rejected the presence of foreign forces in the region, while the other advocated asking for assistance from foreign entities to enable weak countries to confront threats from abroad.

Advocates of the first viewpoint believed that the presence of foreign forces itself would endanger the security of the region and would diminish the pace of economic growth of the regional countries, the deputy foreign minister pointed out.

Referring to international developments and their impact on the region, Maleki said that undoubtedly, the destruction of the former Soviet Union and the second Persian Gulf War brought about important changes in the region, intensifying the process of the Middle East peace talks and the current crisis in Iraq.

The deputy foreign minister reaffirmed the importance of Iraq in the region and expressed hope that following the lifting of the sanctions on Iraq, a situation could be provided to make cooperation with that country possible.

Touching on the misunderstanding between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) concerning the issue of Abu Musa island, Maleki said that Iran has had talks with the UAE and Tehran believes that the continuation of such talks would be useful. He thanked the efforts of certain countries, especially Qatar, in this regard.

In conclusion, Maleki hoped that the holding of seminars in the two sides of the Persian Gulf would help create an atmosphere of confidence among the regional states.

Aside from officials and experts from Iran, the seminar was attended by a number of countries including Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, France, Germany, Britain, the U.S., China, Japan, Sweden, India, Tunisia and Russia.

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French Company To Help Develop Sirri Oil Fields

NC1612164595 Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian 7 Dec 95 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The financial strategy director of the French TOTAL company Alain Madec announced yesterday: The French TOTAL oil company believes that there is no legal basis for any possible punitive sanctions by the United States against this company for its cooperation with Iran, especially in regard to the Sirri oil fields.

According to the Central News Unit, the National Iranian Oil Company and the French company TOTAL have signed an agreement for an investment of $600 million by TOTAL for the development of the Sirri oil fields in the Persian Gulf. This agreement was signed after the U.S. company CONOCO revoked its deal with Iran and the British- Dutch Shell company also reneged on its agreement.

He denied that TOTAL had replaced the U.S. CONOCO firm regarding the Iranian project, after the U.S. embargo on Iran and said: We have not replaced CONOCO. We have been negotiating with Iran since 1995, even before CONOCO did. The agreement that we signed has different bases than the one with the U.S. company. Next week the U.S. Congress will discuss a bill to boycott those foreign companies which are cooperating with Iran.

Report on Foreign Companies Replacing U.S. Firms

LD1912105895 Tehran IRNA in English 1013 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 19, IRNA — A great number of foreign companies are willing to replace U.S. companies in Iran's oil deals, said a report broadcast by Radio Moscow.

Considering the fact that the big European states have not yet joined the sanctions imposed by the U.S. against Iran, observers are doubtful about the positive results of such measures.

Referring to the agreement between Tehran and the French company Total on exploiting oil and gas from Iran's Sirri Island, Radio Moscow mentioned that Total company officials have announced that there is no legal base for imposing the U.S. sanctions due to the trade ties that existed between Total and Iran.

The report added that a great number of foreign companies have expressed willingness to participate in Iran's oil and gas projects, particularly as Iranian officials have asked them to take part in the next tender for government deals.

According to the same source, certain foreign firms were interested in taking advantage of the U.S. embargo and replace American companies in oil-related transactions.

Armenian Ambassador Comments on Cooperation

LD1912112995 Tehran IRNA in English 0948 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Zahedan, Sistan-Baluchestan Prov., Dec. 19, IRNA —The contract for conveying Iranian gas to Armenia has already been concluded and the joint power plant is scheduled for construction by Tehran and Yerevan on the Aras River in northwestern Iran, announced Armenia's ambassador to Iran Vahan Bayburdian here on Monday [18 December]. The envoy said that Iran acts as a connecting bridge for Armenia, the Central Asian states and the southeast countries including India.

Remarking on the recent trip of Armenian President Levon Ter- Petrosyan to India, Bayburdian stated that Yerevan-New Delhi economic cooperation is in the preliminary phases, believing that these ties should be settled through Iran. He further stated that the expansion of India-Armenia relations should be done in a manner that guarantees tripartite cooperation among Iran, Armenia and India.

The trilateral cooperation among Iran, Armenia and Turkmenistan is now established and the initial steps to commence cooperation among Iran, Armenia, Georgia and Bulgaria are underway, he added.

Bayburdian also called for cooperation among Iran, Armenia and Greece. The Islamic Republic is a link between Central Asia and India, he underlined, adding that Armenia is being considered as a way to connect Iran with Russia and East Europe.

The Armenian ambassador was in Zahedan to welcome Armenian President Ter-Petrosyan who had a short stop at Zahedan Airport on his way back to his country from India.

Nateq-Nuri Assails Separation of Religion, Politics

LD1712124695 Tehran IRNA in English 1237 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 17, IRNA — Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri on Sunday [17 December] termed the discussion on separation of religion from politics as medieval age calls.

Addressing the open session of Majles, he reiterated that some members of Iranian society are attempting to create a gap between ulema and university students.

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During the past centuries, particularly in the current century particularly since the victory of the Islamic revolution, the enemies of Islam have been trying to sow discord among seminaries and universities, he underlined.

Nateq-Nuri referred to martyrs Mofatteh, Motahhari, Beheshti and Bahonar as those who played a crucial role in creating unity between theological centers and universities.

Officials Discuss Nuclear Energy Issues

LD1812212595

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian at 1640 GMT on 18 December airs as part of its 29-minute "Political Program" a discussion with Reza Amrollahi, president of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization, and Mohammad Reza Ayatollahi, Iran's representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency, with an unidentified correspondent.

Both men begin by discussing how many countries in the world are now benefiting from nuclear energy. Amrollahi says there are 432 nuclear stations in the world and 109 in the United States alone. They also discuss why the United States is trying so hard to prevent Iran from benefiting from nuclear power "for peaceful purposes."

Ayatollahi explains Iran's resolve, after the victory of the revolution, to rely on itself and free itself from dependence on the West, is the main reason behind U.S. hostility. He says: "Essentially, after the Islamic Revolution, the United States cannot tolerate to see the Islamic Republic of Iran making progress in industry, science and the field of research." He adds that whereas the Americans felt comfortable with the last Pahlavi Shah because they considered him to be their own "gendarme" in the region, they could not accept that after the Islamic revolution, Iran wants to "stand on its own feet and work for its own people, serving Islam and the revolution."

Ayatollahi continues:"The Islamic Republic of Iran's progress in the peaceful nuclear industry — and all of it is for peaceful purposes — this is a thorn in the United States' side and it is because of this that the United States is restless and resorts to any means to deprive us from our natural rights."

Amrollahi explains that in spite of all the hostilities by enemies since the revolution, the country's experts and officials have worked very hard and used their initiatives to make some technological progress, especially in the field of agriculture and also in the medical field. For instance, the country is now producing all the disposable medical products it needs.

Amrollahi continues: "I believe the future of nuclear energy in our country is good. If we push ahead with the necessary investment and speed up the completion of the Bushehr power plant which we are in the process of completing, and if we also complete the work started with the Chinese — at the same speed as we have so far — then I feel that the future of nuclear power plants is bright."

The program ends with Amrollahi saying: "With regard to our cooperation with Russia. I should say this — now, Russia much more clearly but China the same — both of them see that we are a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and on the basis of the numerous inspections by that agency and the numerous opinions issues, we have not done anything wrong. And Russia and China are the manufacturers and producers of this industry and they therefore would also like to work with others and I thus see no obstacles standing in the way of our cooperation."

Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railway Inaugurated

96LA0059A Tehran IRAN NEWS (SPECIAL ISSUE) in English Oct 95 pp 2-4

[Article by Engineer Mohammadreza Montazeri: "Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railway Is One of the Largest Civil Works of Iran"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railway which has been inaugurated after 13 years of enthusiastic work by the Iranian experts and workers, is one of the largest civil works of Iran, said Engineer Mohammadreza Montazeri, the executive project manager of the railway.

Speaking on the objectives pursued by this project, he stated that by inaugurating this railroad Bandar 'Abbas is now linked to the State Railroad Network which in turn, can facilitate imports and exports of goods via Bandar 'Abbas and also enables the recently autonomous countries in Central Asia to have access to the free and international seas.

Eng. Montazeri then enumerated other objectives of this project which are:

—To meet the requirements of Gol-Gohar iron ore mine,
—To meet the requirements of Sarcheshmeh copper complex,
—To meet the requirement of the steel complex and the refinery now under construction in Bandar 'Abbas,
—To partially provide an access bridge intended between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

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According to the Project Manager, the project construction works which began in 1360 (1982) has taken a cost of Rls. 520 billion plus $550 million.

"Since the establishment of the first Iranian nationwide railroad in 1317 (1938) and the subsequent extensions which have been made in certain areas over the last 40 years, this is now the largest project accomplished in railroad industry in Iran," said Montazeri, adding that the Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railroad comprises one main track with a length of 635 km. along with two secondary railroads, one with a length of 11 km., extending up to Gol-Gohar Mine and the other one, 43 km. long, reaching Sarcheshmeh copper mine. This railroad which links the Persian Gulf to the nationwide railroad network of Iran, was originally reviewed and studied in 1353 by "Iran-Kampsax" an Irano-Danish consulting engineers, for construction of an electric railroad.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution and culmination of the Islamic Republic in Iran, the project was reviewed again in 1360 (1982) and was approved by the government with priority. Pursuantly, the Deputy of the Ministry of Roads and Transportation in Railroads Construction and Development, commenced the construction of a double- track railroad. After the elapse of 13 years of industrious works, the project was eventually inaugurated on 17-3-1995, at the presence of the Iranian President and the presidents of Kyrgystan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Afghanistan and scores of other high-ranking officials from ECO member states and the Persian Gulf littoral states.

According to Eng. Montazeri, there are 2,270 bridges with a total length 26 km. and tunnels with a total length of 17,312 m. constructed along this railroad. The longest tunnel is 3,100 meters and the longest bridge is 440 meters, said Montazeri.

Names of Consulting Engineers and Contractors of Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railway

No.	Subject of Contract	Consulting Eng.	Contractor
1	Bandar 'Abbas township	Hamsoo	Arwandrah, Sangwan, Shole-Khavar, Jaheshsas, Ras Bandar 'Abbas, Garamoon
2	Fin township	Iran-Sahel	Yamgan & Alaveh
3	Kaveh township	Passilo	Soknaye Jonoob
4	Sinjan township	Sharmend	Khane Sazi Iran, Tange Zaqh, Saman, Gossal Hurmozgan Railway Office
5	Khatoonabad township	Hamsoo	Taften, Rahfam, Kermanshen, Ashkanik, Eistaeikar
6	Bafq township	Tarh va Kavosh	Soknaye Jonoob, Shole-Khavar, Yamgan, Alaveh
7	Bandar 'Abbas station	Hamsoo	Sarmal, Bonyad (MJF) Construction Section, Tange Zaqh, Shole-Khavar
8	Fin station	Iran Sahel	Shaloodeh-Alaveh
9	Tazarj station	Iran Stone	CBG
10	Kaheh	Passilo	Nimrokh-Nirodeh
11	Gol-Gohar station	Construction Researches	General Mechanic-Ashkanik
12	Khatoon abad, Ahmadabad, Malekabad, Shahemabad	Construction Researches	(MJF) Housing and Development Section
13	Bandar 'Abbas shanting yard	Rahab	CBG
14	Khatoonabad access road	Passilo	Kermanshen

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No.	Subject of Contract	Consulting Eng.	Contractor
15	Malekabad access road	Passilo	Rahdeh
16	Nooq access road	Iran Stone	Omran-Niro
17	Ahmadabad access road	Sirjan area office	Hormuzgan railway office
18	Supply and production and distribution of ballast	Sirjan and Bandar 'Abbas area	Sisway, Kermanshen, Train-ballast, of IRI's Railway
19	Top surface (finishing)	Deputy of Construction	IRI's Railway
20	Base (cushion) of segment one	Bridge and tunnel in Bandar 'Abbas area	Jihad of Soob railway construction
21	" " " two	Rahab	Shaloodeh-Donapol-Samal-CBG
22	" " " three	Iran Sahel	Shaloodeh
23	" " " four	Etehade Rah	Divoo
24	" " " five	Iran Stone	Nirpars-CBG
25	" " " six	Faradid	Divoo
26	" " " seven	Passilo	Nimrokh-Dashtsazan
27	" " " eight	Harazrah	Development of Iranian roads
28	" " " nine	Sirjan area	CBG-daywork site
29	" " " ten	Sirjan area	daywork site
30	" " " eleven	Hagza	Machine Manufacturing of Arak-Paradis
31	" " " twelve	Iran Stone	Nimrokh
32	" " " thirteen	Iran Stone	Nirpars
33	" " " fourteen	Iran Stone	Toofan
34	" " " fifteen	Arsika	Malavi
The responsibility of the project coordination was shouldered by Metra Consulting Engineers			
Soils and Technical Laboratory of the Ministry of Road and Transportation was responsible for quality control of the project.			

Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railroad consists of 10 stations, 6 residential townships with a total constructed area of 350,000 sq.m. In addition to the above said 10 stations, there are other auxiliary stations constructed at different intervals between the main stations, he said.

In continuation of his briefing, Montazeri referred to the advantages of this railroad for providing a linkage between Shahid Rajaeei Jetty, one of the two significant Iranians southern ports, and the nationwide railroad network, which, in addition to facilitating transportation of passengers, can accelerate ships cargoes offloading process in the southern ports and thus reduce the amount of traffic on the main roads in the area, while railroads cargo transport capacity can increase from the present 20 million tons a year to 40 million tons a year.

In view of such increased capacity, said Montazeri, the countries of the Central Asia such on Kyrgystan, Kazaqstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenia, Armenia, Georgia and Afghanistan will be able to reach the Persian Gulf for import and export of their commodities via this railroad. In fact, the Iranian railroad will serve as a transit route for the above-mentioned countries, which means considerable amounts of foreign currency revenues for them.

On the technical aspects of this project, Eng. Montazeri stated that Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railroad consists of 14 segments, with the 15th segment extending up to Sarcheshmeh copper complex. Length of each segment is about 50 km. The station has been equipped with the required installations and facilities to meet their technical requirements for a proper operation. Among

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such facilities are: repair workshop for passenger and cargo cars, depots for locomotive and fuel storage tanks.

Also, the railroad is equipped with C.T.C. electrical signals and telecommunications system with co-axial cables. The C.T.C. system is located in Sirjan station which keeps surveillance on all movement both on main and the secondary routes. The railroad has been designed for electric trains, but in the first phase of operation, diesel electric locomotives are used, Montazeri said.

The first and foremost objective of this project is to link Bandar 'Abbas, the largest port of Iran after Imam Khomeini Port, both on the Persian Gulf, to the Nationwide Railroad Network.

Bandar 'Abbas, in fact, consists of two ports: the first one with a berth - Jetty of 1,050 m. long and 10.5 m. deep, capable to accommodate ships with capacities up to 30,000 tons.

A new commercial port has recently been constructed about 20 km. on the western flank of Bandar 'Abbas. The new port is equipped with the necessary facilities for loading and offloading of containers, with a total capacity of about 10 m. tons a year. Both the above-mentioned ports are now linked to Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railroad.

In addition to the main objective, namely imports/exports of goods via Bandar 'Abbas, the railroad pursues some other objectives as follows:

—to meet the requirements of Gol-Gohar iron ore mine,
—to meet the requirements of Sarcheshmeh copper complex,
—to meet the requirements of Bandar 'Abbas steel complex (under construction),
—to meet the requirements of the oil refinery in Bandar 'Abbas (under construction),
—to meet the requirements of Sirjan free trade zone,
—to establish part of the Sirjan bridge linking the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf,
—to supplement the foundation of local transportation facilities within the corridor extended between Bafq-Sirjan-Bandar 'Abbas.

2. Advantages of the Project

A-Economic Development:

Gol-Gohar Mine is linked to the new railroad; Gol-Gohar iron ore mine is located at about 50 km. south of Sirjan. The mine is only 10 km. from the railroad. The crop of this mine which is being prepared for use, is now foreseen to reach 5.5 m. tons by the next 2 years. Total crops of this mine are planned to be transported by railroad, to the main destinations, i.e., Bandar 'Abbas Steel Complex, Bardseer and Isfahan. This mine is linked to the main railroad by an 11 km. long secondary railroad.

The Access Road of Sarcheshmeh Copper Mine:

This mine is located at a distance of 50 km. from Sirjan and about 43 km. from the new railroad. The annual capacity of this mine is about 150,000 tons, all of which are to be transported by the railroad.

Services for Hormuzgan Steel Complex

Hormuzgan steel complex located near Bandar 'Abbas has consumed some one million tons of the ore from Gol-Gohar mine. The fuel requirement of this complex will be met by using natural gas. A major portion of the steel produced in this complex will be used either in ship-building industry or will be exported by sea.

Bandar 'Abbas Refinery Linked to the New Railroad

Products of the new oil refinery in Bandar 'Abbas, is now estimated to be 150,000 barrels a day or 8 million tons per year.

About 50 percent of these products will be either used in Bandar 'Abbas area or exported. The other half will be transported to Sirjan and Bafq as well as the other parts of the country by roads or railroad. Such traffic will considerably pick up for the railroad tonnage, within the next 10 years.

The Surface Bridge Linking the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf

Most of the countries which gained autonomy pursuant to the disintegration of the former USSR are landlocked.

The railroads of these countries head for Russia. Any transportation in these countries for import or export of commodities shall be through transit via the Russian soil and this does not always guarantee interests of these recently autonomous states.

The status quo prompts these states to establish new route leading to the sea. They are avid to have new surface roads taking them to the European countries.

Presently, there are two alternatives being considered, but to materialize such objective, it is necessary that some other routes be constructed first.

The first alternative is to link the railroad station in Sari to Amirbad port on the Caspian Sea. In this way, any country with a port on the Caspian Sea will be able to reach the Persian Gulf by passing through Amirabad,

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Sari, Garmsar, Tehran, Bafq and then Bandar 'Abbas, all within Iranian territory.

The second alternative is to construct a railroad linking the Iranian nationwide railroad to the railroad of Turkmenistan. This objective can be materialized by establishing Mashhad - Sarakhs railroad and connecting the same to the Nationwide Railroad Network at Turkmenistan border.

The second alternative also provides access to the Persian Gulf via Sarakhs, Mashhad, Tehran, Bafq and Bandar 'Abbas.

The precise amount of cargoes to be transported on this "surface bridge" in future cannot be estimated now. Nevertheless a great role that Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas will play for such potential traffic in the future is certain and beyond a shadow of doubt.

Infrastructures Already Operational on Bafq-Sirjan-Bandar 'Abbas Access Road

In addition to railroad, other significant access roads available in the corridor of Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas are: Bandar 'Abbas-Sirjan-Kerman road and Kerman-Rafsanjan-Yazq road, both of them asphalted, double-lane and with medium capacity for traffic.

Bandar 'Abbas-Kerman-Yazd road is presently used for heavy traffics of trucks moving between Bandar 'Abbas, Isfahan and Tehran. It is foreseen that the new railroad would considerably relax the traffic on this access road.

B-Reduced Fuel Consumption and Air Pollution

A comparison between fuel consumed by railroad and other transport vehicles for transport of an identical amount of cargo, say one ton, suggests that railroad consumes fuel 2-4 times less. This considerably reduces the amount of air pollution.

Pollution caused by locomotives fuel in the first place depends on amount of fuel that they consume.

Average pollution foreseen now in Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas corridor measured on the basis of gram per liter of fuel and a ton per kilometer, is indicated by the following table:

Table 1

—	So2	Ch2	CO	Nox
Pollutions (g-lit.)	3.4	1.0	2.6	71.5
Total (ton-km-year)	0.27	0.8	21	5.65

The project technical specifications:

length of the main railroad, 630 km, double-track railroad,
width of the secondary railroad, 70 km single track railroad,
length of the railroad, 1,435 mm. standard,
speed of passenger train, 160 km per hour,
speed of cargo train, 100-120 km per hour,
Minimum curve, 700 meters,
Maximum slope, 12.5 per thousand,
traverse used in the main railroad, pre-stressed single-piece concrete b-70,
traverse used in the stations, saturated wood,
axial load, 25 tons,
rail, UIC-60 kg. per meter, using (long-welding) type.

3- Railroad and Various Types of Goods

A-Competition between roads and railroads:

Road transport vehicles, particularly those moving on the main road between Bandar 'Abbas-Isfahan-Tehran via Kerman, will continue competing with the railroad. At any rate, the share railroad is supposed to take in transport of cargo and passenger is as follows:

Table 2

Goods	Railroad	Road
Minerals	100%	0%
Steels	80%	20%
Import and Export Goods	50%	50%
Fuel	50%	50%
Agricultural produce	20%	80%
Industrial goods	20%	80%
Passenger	5%	95%

B-Traffic foreseen

Details of passenger, minerals and other goods to be transported by Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas railroad are indicated by tables No 2 and No. 3 below.

A major portion of the relevant figures pertains to transport and relocation of import/export goods between Bandar 'Abbas and the central part of the country, including the traffic on the "surface bridge" of the

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Caspian Sea via Turkmenistan, and iron ores from Gol-Gohar Mine.

Amount of fuel products from Bandar 'Abbas refinery is also supposed to substantially increase after 5 years.

Mode of the Railroad Construction

The construction of the sub-base of Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railroad totally in 14 segments, about 50 km each, was put for international tender. Construction of the secondary railroad extending to Sarcheshmeh copper complex is the 15th segment.

Qualified and experienced Iranian and foreign contractors have been employed for construction of the above-mentioned segments. The construction works on tunnels and bridges have been executed satisfactorily.

The contractors of Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railroad implemented the project by using modern mechanized methods.

A considerable amount of explosives have been used for boring the tunnels and cutting the trenches needed for the project. The borrow pits (areas) and wastes dumping spots have been majorly selected close to the railroad route. In most cases, the borrow areas have been restored on completion of the construction works.

Access Roads

Access roads have been constructed by the contractors to ease transport of personnel and equipment to the sites. Most of the access roads have been made only for a temporary use. In certain areas the access roads have been required to be constructed as per given technical specifications, thus making them suitable for further use.

Ancillary Installations for Operation

Ancillary installations and facilities are to be carried out in the main stations by taking into account the actual requirements. These ancillaries are:

Trains traffic controlling system

The new railroad is equipped with C.T.C. electrical signals and telecom system with co-axial cable. The C.T.C. center is stationed in Sirjan whereby movements of all vehicles both on main and secondary roads can be monitored.

Electrification

The Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas Railway has been designed for electric trains. However, diesel-electric locomotives are used in the first phase pending the use of electric trains in the future. Type of electric trains foreseen for this railroad will be single-phase 25 kv., 50 cycles with overhead cable.

Considering a huge budget needed for electrification of the railroad and a relatively cheap diesel fuel, it is anticipated that a long time shall be waited before the railroad is electrified. But a project for electric (hauling) train capable to handle very heavy transportation, is already included in the long-term plans.

ANNALS OF THE IRANIAN RAILWAY

Since ancient times, Iran has always been a bridge between the East and the West. The trade road passing through this country was so vital and important that could play a significant role in the Western culture and civilization.

As evidenced by the history of mankind, Asia was the host to great civilization like China and Iran which are recognized as the original source of civilization, sciences, arts and industries of today's world.

Whenever Westerners studied the Asia continent, they viewed Iran as a large junction linking Asia and Europe together.

As marine routes became known to Europeans, Iran's popularity for access road, got on the vane and diminished to certain extend and eventually, the idea of using the Iranian roads was given up.

Once railroad was introduced, Europeans again focused their attention on the advantages that Iran could offer them for transport of commodities by railroad from Europe to Asia.

As a result, once again Iran was regarded as a very significant and vital country for providing communication facility.

Since the very beginning, foreign governments challenged each other over gaining royalty for construction of railroad in Iran. They were successful with such aim to certain extend, but the Big Power rivalry in Iran's neighborhood was an obstacle on their way for a thorough and complete success. Altogether, they were an obstacle for Iran to utilize a remarkable geographical position the country was blessed with. Any action by one of the two countries in this respect, was reacted by another one and such political competitions between the two countries continued throughout the 19th century when the construction of a nationwide railroad was actually started in 1306 and in 1317 Bandar Turkman on south-eastern part of the Caspian Sea was linked to Imam Khomeini Port on Persian Gulf by a 1,394 km. long railroad.

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Another railroad constructed in 1356 linked Garmsar to Shahrood, Mashhad, Tehran, Mianeh, Tabriz, Qom, Kashan, Bafq, Isfahan, Yazq, Zarand and Kerman.

The second huge railroad project of Iran which equals in size the first nationwide railroad network, is Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas double-track railroad with a length of 700 km.

The Engineering studies on this project was first carried out in 1353 (1974) by an Irano-Danish consulting engineers called "Iran-Kampsax." The project was initially supposed to be constructed by foreign companies.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the railroad project was once again put on the table for study and review and the Islamic government approved it for implementation with priority. The General-Department of Railroad Construction and Development of the Ministry of Roads and Transportation which was assigned with such a great task, started the executive works of this project from 1360 (1982).

The project never failed to get the special attention of the Government even during the 8 years of the imposed war and despite all the economic bottleneck and pressures exerted on Iran due to the war, the project continued as scheduled and it was finally completed in 1373 by the committed Iranian experts and personnel.

Railroad A Necessity for Materialization of the National Development

The present railway facilities of Iran comprises 5,400 km of a single-track railroad. Railroads undeniably play a great role for growth and development of country, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Studies are now in progress to construct over 6,000 km. of railroads throughout the country.

The above were said by Eng. Bahrami, the Deputy Minister of Roads and Transportation in charge of Construction and Development of Railroads.

Eng. Bahrami stated that over 1,800 km. of new railroads are now under construction in Iran, which are scheduled for completion by the end of 1376 (March 20, 1998).

Enumerating the so many advantages such as a cheap but safe transportation of both cargoes and passengers and a reduced amount of pollution by trains, he urged that every efforts shall be made to maximize the use of railroads which has been termed by him as a fundamental infrastructure for the national development.

The deputy minister then discussed the railroad development strategy pursued by his ministry which consists of two major sections: 1) development, improvement and operation of the existing railroads, and 2) expansion of the railroad networks through design and construction of new railways in the country.

Elsewhere in his briefing Eng. Bahrami pointed out to the significant role that railroads can play for an optimized operation and exploitation of the so many rich mines that Iran is blessed with and stated that: There are many mines such as Cheqhart iron ore mine in Bafq-Yazd, Gol-Gohar iron ore mine, etc., which are already linked to our nationwide railroad network and some others such as Chadormalu mine, pervadeh and Sangan are planned to be linked to the railroad in the near future.

"Among other objectives followed by the Road Ministry are connection of industrial and agricultural zones to the railroad network, said Eng. Bahrami. "Such moves enable us to make a direct delivery of industrial and agricultural products to the center of use and to points of exit for exporting to other countries," he said. "It will also enable us to deliver the imported raw materials to the industrial centers directly from their ports of entry."

According to Eng. Bahrami, in 1373 (1994-1995) Alborz Industrial town was linked to the Nationwide Railroad Network while Kaveh Industrial town near Saveh is scheduled to be linked by the end of the current-Iranian year (ending March 20, 1996).

Plans are also underway to provide densely populated areas with railroad facility, the deputy minister said and added that: presently 12 provincial centers and 14 provinces of our country are linked to the nationwide railway.

He then referred to special role Iran plays as a transit road between Asia and Europe which calls for further attention to the issue, adding that railroad can surely serve as a very significant transport facilities between the two continents, both for passenger and cargo.

According to Eng. Bahrami, the studies and executive projects now in progress by the Ministry are briefly as follows:

1 - Kermanshah province, study and construction of the West Railway. Total budget required for this project is already approved by the government.
2 - Studies on a railroad linking Hamedan province to the Nationwide Railroad Network (NRN).
3 - Studies on a railroad linking Ardabil province to the NRN.
4 - Studies on a railroad linking West Azarbaijan to the NRN.
5 - Studies on a railroad linking Fars province to the NRN.

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6 - Studies on a railroad linking Bushebr to NRN.
7 - Studies on a railroad linking Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari to the NRN.
8 - Studies on a railroad linking Sistan and Baluchestan province to the NRN.
9 - Studies on the project for construction of Tehran-Isfahan express train.

Another significant task to be take care of by the Ministry is to provide railroad linkage between the entry and exit points throughout the country, which is a great jump toward easing imports/exports of commodities and extension of the state railroad facilities to the railroads of the other neighboring countries, Eng. Bahrami maintained.

The present nationwide railroad network of our country is linked to Imam Khomeini, Khorramshahr and Bandar 'Abbas ports on the Persian Gulf. On the Caspian Sea, Bandar Turkman is linked to the railroad system but due to a reduced sea water there it is actually not usable. However, efforts are being made to put this port back in a suitable condition soon, the deputy minister said.

Also under construction on the Caspian Sea is a double-purpose port for fishing and commercial activities in Amirabad, along with construction of a railroad to be used for the same port when complete, he said.

Major projects in progress by the Ministry are as follows:

1 - Design and construction of double-track Bafq-Bandar 'Abbas railroad which was complete and put into operation only for a single-track, in March 1995.
2 - Design and construction of Mashhad-Sarakhs Railroad, scheduled for completion in 1375 (1996-1997).
3 - Design and construction of facilities for linking the wharf of Astara in Iran to the wharf of Astara in Azerbaijan Republic.
4 - Design of a railroad linking Gilan province from Astara to the NRN in Qazvin.
5 - Design and construction of Lotfabad wharf in Khorassan province and linking the same to Turkmen railroad.

Pakistan

Government Takes 'Strong Exception' to Missile Test

BK1912142995 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has taken strong exception to the reports that India intended to test a surface-to-surface missile [Prithvi] at its Pokharan test site in Rajasthan where it was also reported to be planning to conduct its second nuclear test.

Official sources in Islamabad said this is another sign that India is hell bent to test its nuclear device and its delivery system. The Indian newspaper ASIAN AGE reported that U.S. intelligence experts had apparently mistaken the unusual activity for missile firing for that of nuclear testing. The NEW YORK TIMES reported last week that India was perhaps planning to conduct its another nuclear test.

Official sources in Islamabad commenting on these reports stated that India's plan to test its nuclear device and Prithvi will affect Pakistan's security and it is well aware of India's ambitious missile program. Foreign policy and defense experts in Islamabad have urged the Government of Pakistan to mount an aggressive diplomatic campaign and ensure credibility of its nuclear deterrence in the face of India's preparations to conduct its second nuclear test.

Official Urges Acceleration of Nuclear Program

BK1912145295 Hong Kong AFP in English 1429 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 19 (AFP) — Former Pakistani Army Chief Aslam Beg urged the government Tuesday [19 December] to accelerate the country's nuclear programme following a report that India was preparing to conduct a nuclear test.

"We should activate and accelerate it," Beg told the Associated Press of Pakistan news agency, stressing that the country should maintain nuclear "deterrence at high pitch."

Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee denied Tuesday that India had any plans to conduct a nuclear test. He dismissed a report in THE NEW YORK TIMES last week which said U.S. intelligence officials suspected India was planning to stage a nuclear blast at its Pokharan test site in the desert state of Rajasthan.

Beg, who was army chief from 1988 until the middle of 1991, said Pakistan should take up the reported Indian plan with the UN Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Court of Justice.

Islamabad should also try to convene a conference of the region's countries to build up diplomatic pressure, Beg said.

But he opposed suggestions by several commentators that Pakistan should go for a nuclear test of its own if India went ahead with its reported plan.

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"Pakistan should not become a party to such madness," he said, calling for a "responsible" reaction while "keeping all options open."

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974. Both Pakistan and India deny having nuclear weapons but it is believed in the West that the two are capable of speedily assembling atomic weapons.

Indian Nuclear Test, Nation's 'Options' Addressed

BK1812163095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Assembly has been assured that Pakistan will evaluate its options if India carried out another nuclear bomb explosion. Responding to a call attention notice in the house today, parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, George Clement, said Pakistan is fully alive to the ramifications of such a development and would adopt appropriate policy to safeguard its security. He said the nation is fully prepared to meet the conspiracies of the enemy against the security of the country. He said Pakistan is seriously concerned over reports that India may be preparing to carry out a nuclear weapon test. We are in contact with all our friends and have conveyed our concern at the seriousness of the situation.

George Clement said Pakistan is consistently promoting all efforts to ensure nuclear nonproliferation. It [India's nuclear test] will destabilize South Asian region and serious compromise prospects of concluding a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. He said Pakistan is concerned over India's ambitious nuclear and ballistic missile program.

The call attention notice was moved by Chaudhary Mohammad Jaffer Iqbal, Chaudhary Mohammad Tahir, Mr. Mohammad Zafarullah Khan, Rana Zahed Tausif, and Haji Muhammad Buta.

Daily Urges Action To Stall Indian Nuclear Test

BK1912062295 Islamabad THE NATION in English 19 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Increasing Suspicions"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Although India has denied that it intends to conduct a nuclear test. The New York Times [NYT], which had first come out with the report of Indian preparations for such a test, has observed a change in New Delhi's reaction. NYT has noted the change from denial to calling the report "highly speculative" as a deliberate attempt at maintaining ambivalence about its real intentions. Besides, the fact that the US State Department, with its own means of confirming such reports, has taken the matter seriously, seems to confirm the suspicion that the Indian explanation for the activities at Pokharan, the site of its '74 N [nuclear] explosion, are not indicative of a routine military exercise, as the Indian government would have outsiders believe. There are some who argue that the international atmosphere at this time has made it extremely difficult for any nation to conduct nuclear test, and the example that is quoted in this context is that of France which, in spite of being an established nuclear power, has had to face severe international censure for carrying out its recent tests. But then India is a country so consumed by its passion for becoming a big power that it hardly ever bothers about any negative opinion that may seek to keep it from building a formidable military capability — be it the signing of the NPT [nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] or the acquisition of lethal technology for its integrated missile program. Unfortunately, in pursuing a course of senseless militarism, it has received indirect aid and abetment from the Western countries, particularly the US, which have been treating the country's nuclear program with bland resignation while reserving discriminatory laws and admonitions of various kinds for Pakistan. This attitude may have emboldened the Indian leadership to go ahead with the testing of its second nuclear device before the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty comes into effect in '96 and makes it almost impossible for any nation to do nuclear testing. As is being widely mentioned, the present timing of the test also coincides with the Narasimha Rao government's need to help boost its sagging popularity while the general elections are right around the corner.

As expected, the public reaction in Pakistan to this grave security threat form India has been extremely strong. Various public opinion leaders have already started pressurizing the government to respond to the situation by exploding a nuclear device of its own. Anyone familiar with the history of Indo-Pak relations and the nature of sensitivities involved, would know that if India does go ahead with its plans for the test, this country would have no choice but to do the same, regardless of any amendments that the US legislators may want to put in place by way of punitive measures. Hence the time to keep South Asia from an escalation of a nuclear race is now. Those interested in non-proliferation must act before India adds a new dimension to the nuclear question in this rather volatile part of the world. There is some reassurance in the reports that the US government is taking the Indian preparations for the test "very seriously" and is in the process of raising the issue with the Indians at a senior diplomatic level. One can only hope that these efforts will have a sobering effect on any designs that New Delhi might have about enhancing its nuclear capability by conducting a new nuclear test. It is also time for anti-nuclear non-government movements

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to do what they can to keep India from harming any prospects for a nuclear-free South Asia.

Daily Blames West for Indian Nuclear Test Threat

BK1812100495 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 17 Dec 95 p 7

[Editorial: "Indian Bomb"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The report that India is preparing to conduct a second nuclear test confirms Pakistan's repeated warnings about Delhi having become a full-fledged nuclear power and imperiling South Asian security. This will not only exacerbate the existing conventional and tacit nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan but increase the chances of thermonuclear devastation in the region. With Delhi having already started the assembly line production of the Prithvi missile, which has the capability of delivering a nuclear payload, the need for a second explosion acquires eminent sense. It is required to gather as much test data as possible to meet India's needs for developing nuclear weapons before the comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is enforced next year.

The clutch of Western nuclear powers which have assumed the responsibility of preventing the further testing and production of nuclear weapons strangely enough have failed to curb India's galloping nuclear ambitions in spite of the information they had about it. Their intelligence agencies had been carefully monitoring the developments in the region and detailed India's clandestine effort to acquire nuclear credibility. However, it was Pakistan which ultimately became a victim of their squeeze rather than India, which was allowed to continue with its nuclear programme aimed at developing thermonuclear weapons.

The results of this myopic Western policy are seen today in the level of development reached by Delhi which has made a second, more sophisticated test necessary. The first one in May 1974 at Pokharan in the Rajashtan desert near the Pakistan border was said to be a fairly simple device, which India described as a "peaceful nuclear explosion." This time the data would be used to build up its nuclear arsenal, giving it a head start in the regional arms race. It is not clear what the Western powers intend to do about this latest threat, apart from issuing a traditional, watery warning to India.

The White House has made the customary diluted statement of disapprobation with necessary diplomatic barbs. It was not much different from what was said every time India crossed the line the US had set to keep its ambitions within limits instead of viewing the report of the potential test with alarm, the comment saw it as shaking up the regional balance and dooming the chances of a global test ban treaty. Conversely, in Pakistan's case, even a suspect nuclear programme was considered a danger to world security. It was unnecessarily given an Islamic stamp which made all the difference compared to what should now be seen as a Hindu bomb.

India's ability to progress unimpeded along a nuclear track has been possible only due to the error of the West of perceiving it in context of the regional arms race than at a global level. If this programme reaches fruition it will not only completely dwarf South Asian nuclear capability but enter India in the list as an equal world power. In such a situation, the threat would now extend as far as Delhi's hegemonical ambitions go.

Leghari Comments on Energy Resources, Indian Test

BK1812141795 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said the distribution of world resources is extremely distorted and poses a threat to world peace. Inaugurating the Asia-Pacific solar experts conference on renewable energies in Islamabad, he said the situation has reached a critical stage.

[Begin Leghari's recording] We have, as you know, extreme distortion in the distribution of energy throughout the world. Twenty-five percent of the world's population, which is living in the industrialized countries of the world, they are consuming more than two-thirds of the world's energy, and seventy-five percent of the world's population has to do with one-third of the world's energy resources. This kind of a warped distribution is going to be a major threat to world peace. It is going to lead to the kind of situation the preview of which is available of what is happening in Africa and with large populations concentrated in these areas — people without basic needs, people with scant energy. Really, this cannot go on for long and this is going to lead to famines, going to lead to mass migration, going to lead to boat people. [end recording]

The president said the industrial world is stopping transfer of technology and dissemination of knowledge in order to maintain the status quo. The multinationals have bought out the experts from all over the world and mankind can no more benefit from their research work and excellence. Experts should come up to break these barriers.

Special assistant to the prime minister for social sector, Mrs. Shahnaz Wazir Ali, said the financial requirements to meet growing energy demand in the developing world

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are estimated to be almost twice than what is actually invested. The resultant backlog causes significant bottlenecks for economic development. The situation requires a quick solution.

The experts at Islamabad will prepare five leading documents for submission to the world solar summit to be held in Zimbabwe next year. The documents are world solar charter, world plan of action, world solar fund, international solar treaty and strategic projects.

Later, talking to newsmen, the president said he believes India is preparing for another nuclear explosion.

[Begin Leghari recording in progress] ... do or whatever, but I do not know, I have not got any other information, except that what we heard in THE NEW YORK TIMES. I believe there is some preparation that they are undertaking. I do not know whether they will do not it or not. [end recording]

On a question about the appointment of the new army chief, the president said there is no suspense in this regard. Everything is being done in accordance with the Constitution and an announcement will be made in due course of time. He said he was amazed by press reporters regarding this.

Leghari on Karachi, Kashmir, Indian Missiles

BK1912044595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 19 Dec 95

[Unattributed report on speech by President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari to the Pakistani-American Physicians Public Affairs Committee in Islamabad "last night"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said democracy has taken firm roots in the country and there is no danger to the system. He was addressing the annual dinner of Pakistani-American Physicians Public Affairs Committee in Islamabad last night. The committee represents Pakistani doctors settled in the United States. The president reminded that countless people had given sacrifices for the revival of democracy during the long period of dictatorship in the country. As a result of their sacrifices, there is democracy in the country now. He said the government and the opposition have consensus on major national issues, including country's security, peaceful nuclear program, Kashmir, and economy with liberalization and deregularization. However, because of polarization in other spheres, the impact of consensus is not being felt. He expressed the confidence that a dialogue between the government and the opposition will bring about consensus on other issues, which will ultimately strengthen the democratic setup in the country.

Referring to the situation in Karachi, the president hoped it would improve soon. He said he had told the Altaf Group leaders that they must renounce terrorism and give up arms. Once it is done, the way would be paved for holding local bodies elections within six months and the Altaf Group can even share responsibilities with the government. He also referred to the gigantic package being implemented by the government to improve civic amenities in Karachi.

About national economy, the president said good harvest of wheat, rice, and cotton after three years of bad harvest would contribute toward increasing growth rate, reducing budgetary deficit, and improving the state of national economy.

Turning to Kashmir, President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said Indian repression in occupied valley has heightened tension in the region and a peaceful solution of the problem in accordance with the UN resolutions would restore normalcy and peace.

Referring to Pakistan-India relations, the president expressed concern over Indian missile program. He declared that Pakistan would not accept any unilateral restrictions on its peaceful nuclear program.

He expressed Pakistan's anxiety over the ongoing fighting in Afghanistan and said it wants Afghan people to choose their own system of government.

Mr. Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari lauded the role of Pakistani- American physicians in serving the cause of Pakistan in the United States.

The chairman of Senate, Mr. Wasim Sajjad, also spoke on the occasion and said parliamentary system is more suited to Pakistan in view of its political and social culture.

The president gave awards to Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, on behalf of the committee for her contribution in uniting Pakistanis in the United States.

The dinner was also attended, among others, by the speaker of National Assembly, federal ministers, and legislators belonging to the treasury and opposition benches.

National Assembly on Israeli and Afghan Policies

Denies Move To Recognize Israel

BK1812020295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Assembly has been given assurance that there is no move to recognize

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Israel nor is there any involvement of Pakistan in secret negotiations to this effect. The assurance was given to the house by the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, Mr. George Clement, in reply to a question by Chaudhary Mohammad Biljis Tahir today.

In reply to another question, he said Pakistan has all along been following a policy of strict neutrality and noninterference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

To a question by Rana Sahib Tauseeq, he informed the house about the government efforts to mobilize world opinion against gross human rights violations in occupied Kashmir. Replying to a question by Muzaffar Ahmad Hashmi, the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs regretted that India has shown no willingness to settle Kashmir dispute as suggested in two Pakistani nonpapers of last year.

Assures Noninterference in Afghanistan

LD1712171095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 1600 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Assembly has been given an assurance that there is no move to recognize Israel, nor is there any involvement of Pakistan in secret negotiations to this effect. The assurance was given to the House by the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, Mr. George Clement, in reply to a question by [name indistinct] today. In reply to another question, he said Pakistan has all along been following a policy of strict neutrality and non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

MQM Leader Calls Bhutto Human Rights 'Abuser'

BK1812070495 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Muhajir Qaumi Movement — MQM — chairman, Mr. Altaf Hussain, has expressed serious doubts about stability in Pakistan in the light of alleged state terrorism unleashed in Karachi and parts of Sindh Province. In an interview to PTI in London, where he lives in exile, Mr. Hussain said that the Benazir Bhutto government is waging a war against its own people. He accused Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto as the most blatant abuser of human rights in the history of Pakistan. The MQM chief termed her exhortations about human rights in international forums as nothing but a farce. He said Islamabad was repeating the error committed by the rulers of the country in the past. Mr. Hussain said the Pakistani authorities doubt the nationalism and loyalty of Muhajirs today as they did about the Bengalis in the past, leading to the creation of Bangladesh.

Opposition Responds to Prime Minister's Offer

BK1712164895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The government has received the opposition leader's letter in response to the prime minister's offer, and the government is prepared to hold talks on all issues except midterm elections. It is the government's prerogative to decide about holding elections before the completion of the five-year term. This was stated by Raza Rabbani, the minister of state for law and justice, and Senator Shafqat Mahmud, Pakistan People's Party's information secretary, while addressing a joint news conference in Islamabad today. Raza Rabbani said Mian Nawaz Sharif's letter will be considered at the next meeting of the Pakistan Democratic Front, and its leadership will review the opposition's demand. He said one thing that is clear is that the question of midterm elections does not arise at all. He also said that the government wants to create a consensus on all national issues, and this is being done in the overall national interest.

International Banks Asked for Short-Term Loan

BK1812085695 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 17 Dec 95 p 1, 10

["RECORDER" report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi: The Pakistan government is tapping the international banking community for a short-term syndicated loan of $200 million, it is reliably learnt.

According to banking sources, leading foreign banks operating in Pakistan were approached by Islamabad to urgently arrange the facility with drawdown before December 24, 1995.

The 12-month term loan is not required to prop up the liquid forex reserves which have improved to over $1400 million with the inflow of $137 million in SWAP [expansion unknown] dollar institutional funds and another $200 million received from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after the standby arrangement.

It is learnt that the State Bank of Pakistan has closed down the special window created with the relaxation of Capital Adequacy Ratio for foreign banks under FY 45 scheme, earning 1 percent above LIBOR [London Interbank Offered Rate], after all the foreign banks in the syndicate complained that the market for placement of $200 million was getting distorted.

Pakistan is required to improve its liquid forex reserves position to $1.8 billion, excluding IMF loans, by end-June 1996 under the 15-month Standby Arrangement

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facility of $600 million approved by the IMF Board last December 13.

With a healthy cotton crop and worldwide demand for yarn on the increase, the authorities are quite hopeful that they would witness a turn-around in the trade account, of which encouraging signs are said to be already on the horizon.

The cause of immediate concern to the government now is : How to bridge the gap of around Rs 17 billion [rupees] between the actual and targeted borrowing from the banking system for budgetary support?

Even with the benefit of Haj funds, loan repayment by WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority], sale of prize bonds, and inflow of income tax receipts, it is feared, there could still be a gap of around Rs 7 billion left in bank-borrowing to be bridged in conformity with the IMF performance criteria of Rs 40 billion as of December 28, 1995. It is in this context, that the overseas commercial banks have been sent scurrying to their head offices to participate in the $200 million syndicated arrangement on which 1.25 percent interest above Labor would be paid.

In terms of the IMF agreement, there exists a scope for raising $200 million. Discussions to this effect were held by the bankers with the Adviser to the Prime Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Vasim A Jaffrey in Islamabad on December 12 and the next day with the SBP [State Bank of Pakistan] Governor, Dr. Mohammad Yaqub, in Karachi to finalize the terms of the loan. The banks approached in this connection are ANZ Grindlyas, Citibank, Bank of America, Faysal Bank, ABN Amro, Standard Chartered and Deutsche Bank.

According to bankers, the way of working in Islamabad sadly has not changed over the years. "When the banks on different occasions during the year approach the ministry with offers for short-term loans at rates 110 points above LIBOR, they are told to lower the rate to at least 105 points. And when Islamabad is in need, it is prepared to pay even 126 points above LIBOR. This just goes to show that coordination is lacking between the budget wing and external finance, while in the matter of cash flow forecasting the government experts are rather weak," the bankers say.

There are about 30 banks mainly concentrated in the Middle East and Europe which can be asked to participate in a syndicated arrangement for Pakistan. To broaden this base will necessitate having a "floating Rate Note" so that the government's borrowing graduates to investment level to tap investment banks on the capital market. In order to achieve this, a proper credit rating would be needed. This, however, presupposes consistency in the macroeconomics frame work which is surely lacking say the bankers.

Leghari Appoints Karamat New Army Chief

BK1812155695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A Defense Ministry announcement in Islamabad today says that General Abdul Waheed will retire on 12 December at the end of his tenure as army chief. The president has promoted Lieutenant General Jahangir Karamat to the rank of general in Pakistan's Army effective immediately. The president has also appointed General Jahangir Karamat as army chief which will come into force from 12 December.

General Jahangir Karamat called on President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari at the Presidency in Islamabad today. He thanked the president for appointing him as the army chief, and said he would serve the country and the people to the best of his ability.

Military Command, Staff Changes, Promotions

BK1812125195 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 18 Dec 95 p 1, 8

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The General Headquarters here Sunday [17 December] reshuffled the military command and staff structure appointing two new Corps Commanders.

According to sources, the General Headquarters took a series of decisions relating to the appointment of the two new Corps Commanders, two new Principal Staff Officers (PSOs), promotion of two senior-most Major Generals to their next rank, retirement of four Lieutenant Generals by Dec. 31 and appointment of three recently retired 3-star Generals to Army-funded high profile organizations.

While the ISPR [Interservice Public Relations] people avoided speaking on the reshuffle in the command and staff structure the services public relations directorate announced approval of the government for promotion of Major General Arshad Mahmud (Deputy Chief of General Staff) and Major General Nasim Rana (Director-General Inter-Services Intelligence) [DG ISI] to the rank of Lieutenant General. Both the military officers have been promoted with immediate effect, with Rana to continue as DG ISI. Rana was appointed ISL chief on Aug. 5 this year when Lt. Gen. Javed Ashraf Zazi was appointed Corps Commander Gujranwala.

The sources said on promotion to the rank of Lieutenant General. Arshad Mahmud has been appointed Master General Ordnance (MGO) in place of Lt. Gen. Saranjam Khan.

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Master General Ordnance Saranjam Khan, said the sources has been appointed corps Commander Quetta. He will replace Lt. Gen. Ziaullah, who had taken over as Corps Commander Quetta when the present COAS [Chief of the Army Staff] General Abdul Waheed, was appointed Army chief on the death of general Asif Nawaz due to heart ailment.

In another significant move, Adjutant General (AG) Moeenuddi Hyder has been made Corps Commander Lahore. He will take over charge when the present Corps Commander, Hamayan Bangash retires from Army on Dec. 31. Corps Commander Quetta Ziaullah succeeds Moeenuddi Hyder as Adjutant General, said the sources.

Taking another important decision on the retirement of four Lieutenant Generals, the government has decided to retain these four retiring generals till Dec 31.

Their original date of retirement after an extended period of four months was Dec. 20. "Technically, this is called compulsory just to facilitate these four 3-star Generals to dine out and complete other formalities," said a former high ranking Army Officer.

Now under this decision, Lt. Gen. Tanwir Hussain Naqvi (NDC), Lt. Gen. Ayaz Khan (HIT), Lt. Gen. Hamayan Bangash (Corps Commander Lahore) and Lt. Gen. Akram (JS Headquarters will retire form Army on Dec. 31. Unconfirmed reports say both Hamayan Bangash and Tanwir Naqvi may be posted in Pakistani missions abroad.

Following promotion of three Major Generals to their next rank on Oct. 13 this year, the government promoted two more Major Generals on Sunday. They are Arshad Mahmud and Nasim Rana.

Lieutenant General Arshad Mehmood: Born on Aug. 10, 1940, he was commissioned in the Pakistan army in 1964 in the Corps of Artillery. A graduate of both Command and Staff College and National Defense college, he has vast experience of command, staff and instructional appointments. He has commanded an infantry brigade and two infantry divisions. He took active part in the 1966 war and was awarded Sitara-e-Jurrat. At present he is the Deputy Chief of General Staff. He has also been awarded Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) for his meritorious services.

Lieutenant General Nasim Rana: Born on Sep. 20, 1942, he was commissioned in the Pakistan Army in 1964 in the Corps of Signals. A graduate of both the Command and Staff College and National Defense College, he has vast experience of command, staff and instructional appointments. He has commanded an infantry brigade and an infantry division. He has seen action in the wars of 1965 and 1971. At present he is serving as Director General of Inter-Service Intelligence. He has been awarded Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) for his meritorious services.

In yet another decision, all the Managing Directors of three Army funded organizations have been changed, with recently retired Lieutenant Generals getting these positions. Retired Lt. Gen. Arif Bangash has been appointed Managing Director Fatui Foundation in place of Imtiaz Warriach, retired Lt. Gen. G. M. Malik is to replace as MD Marri Gas Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Hamid Niaz and retired Lt. Gen. Khalid Latif Mughal has been appointed MD Fauji Fertizer in place of Major General (Retd.) Khalilur Rehman.

Sri Lanka

LTTE Press Releases Describe Situation 14-17 Dec

Military Actions, Tamil Eelam Bank

BK1812061395 (Internet) soc.culture.sri-lanka in English 16 Dec 95

["Press release" issued by the LTTE Political Committee at "LTTE Headquarters" on 14 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

The jungles of Amparai under artillery shell attack by the army

As from day before yesterday (12th) the jungles of Kanchikudiyaru area are being hit by artillery shells. The Special Task Force posts of Miragala and Pannalagama are doing the shelling non-stop. Valuable jungle trees are cut down and wild animals are deserting the area.

"I feel that I have returned from a foreign country" says bishop of Jaffna.

Bishop of Jaffna Thomas Savundranayagam has some bitter things to say about his recent trip to Colombo and back. In spite of his efforts to stay in his residence without getting into the road he was checked and double-checked by the Colombo police several times, his identity card was scrutinised like that of a common criminal. He had to cut short his stay and return to Jaffna. In the Thandikulam check-point his purse was emptied and permission was not granted for taking money to Jaffna. "All the time I felt that I was in a foreign country. Now I feel that I am home", says the exhausted Bishop of Jaffna.

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New accounts opened in Bank of Tamil Eelam.

New account holders are joining the Bank of Tamil Eelam. This shows the trust and confidence the people have in its operations. The bank is efficient and its customers are not delayed unnecessarily. This news has spread around and new account holders are on the increase. The bank has no shortage of liquid assets and payments to customers on demand is immediate. For a bank that has started recently this is a most welcome feature.

3000 Depositors selected for refund.

According to an announcement by the financial division of LTTE, 3000 persons will receive their deposits back. This is for the year 1995 and details will be published in the newspaper Eelanatham from tomorrow (15th). This depositors had given these sums on loans to be utilised for the recovery of the motherland. Places and time of payment will be announced in the same newspaper tomorrow. Arrangements have been made for the Vanni settlers to receive their deposits in the Vanni district.

Waste lands of Vanni turn into cultivable lands.

The new settlers of the Vanni have converted the hitherto abandoned land of the Vanni into farmlands. The cultivation of cereals and vegetables have started in earnest. The TEEDOR [expansion unknown] has given the cultivators every encouragement and advice, to make the farmers self-sufficient and profitable.

Eye surgery on a stretcher.

Dr. Gugathasan eye surgeon of the Manthikai base hospital has performed a miracle in modern surgery. Due to lack of proper equipment and assistants he was compelled to perform a complicated eye operation on two patients laid on a stretcher. It was an amazing performance. But circumstances are such that our doctors are compelled to adopt unorthodox methods. The said operations are successful and the patients are recovering rapidly.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE]

(English translation of the LTTE statement released by LTTE International Secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom. Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593)

Navy Attacks Fishermen

BK1812061095 (Internet) soc.culture.sri-lanka in English 17 Dec 95

["Press release" issued by the LTTE Political Committee at "LTTE Headquarters" on 15 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Navy gunboats attack fishermen

Last Sunday the 11th, high speed gunboats of the Sri Lankan navy made a major attack on fishermen in the seas off Sanguppiddy in the North. The fishermen were courageous enough to jump into the sea and swim to the shore. One of the abandoned fishing boats was seized and taken away by the navy.

Dvora type gunboats belonging to the Sri Lankan navy bombarded the coastal areas of Vadamaratchy yesterday (14th) morning at about 7.50 a.m. Houses and valuable trees were destroyed. People of the area fled into the interior seeking shelter. The roof of the Vallai government hospital was broken down and a side wall was also damaged. A Hindu temple in this area was also damaged considerably. Fishermen, fishing on the high seas at that time abandoned their boats together with the nets and fled for safety. The gun boat attack lasted for more than half an hour.

Elderly, very young and the youths are kept separately under occupied areas

Elderly people captured by the Sri Lankan army are kept in the Ilavalai Convent in Jaffna peninsula under army custody. The very young are also kept in the same Convent. But youths are kept in the Palaly army camp separately. The deaths of persons are on the increase due to lack of medical care. The elderly seems to fall easy prey for diseases because of the frustration and loneliness they are experiencing under custody.

Ban for vehicles on Batticaloa main roads

The army and the police in the Batticaloa town are maintaining their safety by banning vehicular traffic on all main roads. The convenience of the public is not taken into consideration. In Vallaichenai area also similar measures are taken by the army and the police. Vehicles entering Batticaloa city from far away places are stopped at the entry points and diverted to other places. In a period of rising fuel prices, this incur additional cost on the long suffering public.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE]

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(English translation of the LTTE statement released by LTTE international secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom, Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593.)

Reports on Civilian Casualties

BK1812060895 (Internet) soc.culture.sri-lanka in English 17 Dec 95

["Press release" issued by the LTTE Political Committee at "LTTE Headquarters" on 16 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

43 dead, 76 badly injured in November alone reports Jaffna Government Agent.

Due to bombs dropped by war planes, artillery shells fired by the army 43 Tamil civilians died and another 76 were badly injured in the month of November 1995. This is from a report of the Government Agent sent to Colombo recently. The above occurred mostly in the Vadamaratchy and Thenmaratchy.

Jaffna Medical faculty may go to the East

The government is taking secret measures to change the venue of the Jaffna medical faculty to the eastern province. The medical faculty of the Jaffna University is now defunct. Under the guise of reviving it, certain government ministers are working closely to take it to an army controlled area in the east.

Simultaneous shelling of Vadamaratchy and Thenmaratchy

Yesterday about 1.30 p.m. both the Palaly and Elephant pass army camps carried out a simultaneous shelling of the Vadamaratchy and Thenmaratchy areas. Artillery shells fell in these areas for more than half an hour. Eluthumadduval and Aliyavalai in Thenmaratchy, Uduppiddy and Vathiri in Vadamaratchy were affected. They fell mostly in open spaces and plantations. About 30 shells fell in Thenmaratchy.

Office of the Jaffna University, Vice Chancellor now function in Kilinochchi

The office of the Vice Chancellor, Jaffna University now functions in the faculty of agriculture, Kilinochchi. A temporary office of the Jaffna University is now in the premises of the Chavakachcheri Hindu College. The Vice Chancellor pays once a month visit to the temporary office at Chavakachcheri from Kilinochchi.

Jaffna University decides to start lectures in the agricultural faculty

A meeting of the Jaffna University Senate held in Chavakachcheri Hindu College under the chairmanship of the Vice Chancellor, Professor K. Gunaratnam decided to start all lectures in the agriculture department at Kilinochchi.

Army and police conduct search in Cheddikulam, 9 Tamil civilians arrested

Cheddikulam village in Vavuniya district was cordoned off by the army and police and house to house search was conducted by them. The Vavuniya-Mannar road was blocked for this search. 9 Tamil civilians were arrested for questioning. Up to now none of them had been released.

80 thousand houses to be erected in the Vanni

For the benefit of the people newly arrived in the Vanni 80 thousand dwelling places will be erected by the TEEDOR and TRO [expansions unknown]. As a first installment, work on the erection of 10 thousand houses has already begun. 5 thousand houses in Kilinochchi, 3500 houses in Mullaitivu, 750 in Mannar 750 in Vavuniya constitute the aforesaid 10 thousand. Land for this project has been allocated in the above districts and the work is nearing completion.

The Sri Lankan Defence Ministry has over ridden approvals given by the Sri Lankan government for the despatch of 50 million rupees in cash for use in the Kilinochchi area. Although non governmental agencies were willing to provide independent protection for the safe delivering of the moneys to the northern areas, the Defence Ministry has rejected the offer. The serious cash shortage in the area is being further compounded by the inability of the banks to service its customers and returning moneys to clients.

The Sri Lankan government banks have refused all loan applications for farming in the kilinochchi area. Although large part of their loans have been always repaid (85% last year) the farmers are unable to borrow any moneys to start farming for the next season. The Sri Lankan Defence Minisury is known to be responsible for this refusal by the banks.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE]

(English translation of the LTTE statement released by LTTE international secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom, Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593.)

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Economic Issues

BK1912035495 (Internet) soc.culture.sri-lanka in English 18 Dec 95

["Press release" issued by the LTTE Political Committee at "LTTE Headquarters" on 17 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Daughter joins the fighting arm of the LTTE with parental encouragement

Mr. S. Subramaniam of Muthayankaddu in Mullaithevu district, has explained his attitude to his eldest daughter joining the fighting arm of the LTTE. If children want to fight for their rights, parents should not stand in their way. I have given every encouragement to my children speaking out for their rights. "It is right and proper for my eldest daughter to become an actual fighter for the LTTE", says the proud father in a press interview.

Ban on slaughter of pedigree cattle and goats

The TEEDOR [expansion unknown] has discovered the wanton slaughter of pedigree milking cows and goats for meat. In order to stop the certain chance of good strains of cattle and goats disappearing from the peninsula, the TEEDOR has made such slaughter a punishable offence. Those who have valuable animals may dispose of them to the TEEDOR if they find it difficult to rear them. People from Thenmaratchy and Vadamaratchy who wish to transport their animals to the Vanni mainland can avail themselves of the free boat transport offered by the LTTE.

Palmyrah and coconut development board of the Valigamam area shifts to the Vanni mainland

The above board with all of its crafts and industries has recently moved to the Vanni mainland. The tappers and other workers of Valigamam have gone to the Puthukudiyiruppu, Kandavalai and Mankulam areas. In order to avail themselves of the labour and produce of these workers, the board too had to find its way to the Vanni. This board works in close co-operation with similar organisations now operating in the Vanni. A section of the palmyrah and coconut board of the Vadamaratchy too is moving to the Vanni mainland.

Difficulties of crossing the Thandikkulam check point on the increase

The various restrictions imposed by the army on passengers going from Colombo to Jaffna through Thandikkulam have increased in recent times. Passengers are allowed to carry with them only a change of clothes. Taking soap, oil, film rolls and foodstuffs are forbidden. Such items are confiscated if passengers bring those with them. No passengers can take more than 3000 rupees with them. Apart from such restrictions, assaults on passengers for no valid reason are common.

Factory producing sugar from palmyrah juice functions in Kandawalai

This factory had for some time gone slack due to lack of adequate machinery, labourers and raw materials. Due to the influx of labourers from Valigamam and bringing in of machinery the factory has started work in full strength. There is a ready market for its products due to the large number of new arrivals in the Vanni mainland.

North East development fund diverted to the army

Money and materials donated by various aid organisations and governments of the development of the north-east is utilised for the needs of the army. The Valigamam is being converted into a military area and the development fund is used for this purpose. The Kankesanthurai harbour is being developed into a naval base with all modern facilities for the loading and unloading of military hardware.

Raw materials of the Jaffna peninsula serves the industrial needs of the south

The Sri Lankan government has taken a very grave step in transporting the raw materials of the North to serve the industrial needs of the south. This will have long term repercussions on the ecology and economic welfare of the North. The government has abandoned its former wish to operate the Kankesanthurai cement factory, instead it started digging the soil-base found in the area around Kankesanthurai and transporting same to the cement factories of Galle and Puttalam. The government hopes to beat the cement shortage by this method. Meanwhile the North will continue to suffer. Thousands of Sinhalese are to be brought to Jaffna for the excavation of raw materials for the cement factories of the South.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE]

(English translation of the LTTE statement released by LTTE international secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom, Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593.)

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